A HISTORY OF THE FRENCH WORKING CLASS

VOLUME I

The Age of Artisan Revolution 1815–1871

Roger Magraw



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Marx's optimism about the revolutionary potential of the European working class derived from his observation of the Parisian and Lyonnais workers' revolts of the 1830s and 1840s. The 'new labour history' sought to explain such precocious class consciousness by studying the workshop and community culture of artisans which, it argued, generated a 'trade socialism' which aspired to build a 'social Republic' around producer cooperatives.

More recently, the 'new labour history', a product of the ephemeral radical optimism of the 1960s, has come under assault from a revisionist historiography influenced by cultural anthropology, post-modernism and feminism, which questions such fundamental premises of labour history as the reality of 'class', the teleology of the 'rise of labour', the obsession with the 'skill' of male workers. Labour historians have been criticised for failing to integrate gender analysis or to analyse discourses *about* workers, for uncritical acceptance of the 'myth' of the artisan and for viewing the Ancien Règime uncritically as a lost Golden Age of craft skills.

In the face of this onslaught is it still possible to seek to describe the 'making of the French working class'? This volume attempts to grapple with the insights of the revisionists, while salvaging what can be salvaged from older labour historiography. It insists on the central importance of the national political context. The 'peculiarities' of French labour owed much to workers' participation in the 'Bourgeois Revolution' of 1789–1830. The shifting labour policies of successive royalist, Bonapartist and Republican règimes were key determinants of the style of labour politics – as was workers' ambivalent relationship with the anticlerical 'progressive' wing of the bourgeoisie.

However, on balance, the book re-asserts the importance of artisanal resistance to perceived threats to their work-culture. Moreover, it insists that although the 'objective' structural class-formation of the French working class was gradual and uneven, a hereditary proletariat was emerging by the 1860s.

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Preface

The recent translation of G. Noiriel's excellent *Les Ouvriers dans la Société Française: XIXe et XXe siècles* (Editions du Seuil, 1986) goes some way towards meeting the need for a general survey of French labour history accessible to English-speaking readers. However, whilst some sections of the present work rely heavily on Noiriel's persuasive analysis, its focus is rather different. Its aim is to offer a more detailed study of labour protest and politics than that attempted by Noiriel, whose main concern is to analyse the gradual and highly erratic structural class formation of the French proletariat.

I am not by training a 'labour historian'. My own primary research has been into French religious and peasant history. I have been fortunate to spend many years teaching at Warwick University, whose Centre for Social History has been an important focus for the activities of a large number of distinguished British and American historians of the working class. Perhaps a tiny fraction of their expertise may, by process of osmosis, have been passed on to me. However, in view of recent evidence that the European working-class movement may be in terminal decline my most relevant qualification for the task in hand may have been to spend several years as a student at Oxford, the classic home of lost causes!

This book is not, therefore, a work of primary research. Its modest aim is to survey the findings of recent social historians whose monograph studies have opened so many new perspectives on the experiences of French workers between the early nineteenth century and the Popular Front. Although some of this material is reasonably accessible to English-speaking readers, much of it is not. There would, thus, appear to be some justification for offering students of modern French history some overview.

One obvious difficulty facing any such attempt to provide a broad synthesis is that the entire historiography of the subject is in a state of flux. Many of the older orthodoxies and patterns of interpretation are not merely under attack but visibly crumbling. As in other European countries the early preoccupation of labour historians tended to be with the 'labour movement', with trade-unions and left-wing parties which purported to represent workers' interests. From the 1960s onwards emphasis began to shift towards a concern with the wider social history of workers. Studies of the job-experiences of specific trades, of urban communities, of popular culture and religion proliferated. The everyday life and attitudes of

'ordinary', non-unionized, unpoliticized workers attracted as much attention as the consciousness and activities of militant minorities.

Such research could, of course, continue to be underpinned by a standard Marxist teleology in which the rise of industrial capitalism was assumed to give birth to a factory proletariat which, in time, developed class consciousness and sustained a socialist labour movement. The weakness of organized labour in the nineteenth century could, thus, be attributed to the slow pace of industrialization and to the consequent survival of craftsmen – and peasants – stubbornly resistant to Marxism and the post–1920 growth of a powerful Communist party could be correlated with the belated appearance of an 'authentic' industrial working class. But such interpretations came to be questioned by a generation of scholars weaned on the works of E. P. Thompson, who argued that in the early phase of industrial capitalism it was precisely those craftsmen dismissed by vulgar Marxist historiography as 'petty-bourgeois' who provided the social base for embryonic 'working-class' and socialist consciousness. Studies of shoe-makers, tailors, silk-weavers, hatters, cabinet-makers, stonemasons and other such 'artisans' radicalized by threats to their skills, status, pride, community, way of life and identity proliferated. The greater 'weight' of such strata in a French economy less dependent than that of Britain on factory textiles, coal and heavy metallurgy could, it was implied, help to explain the greater radicalism exhibited by the French popular classes in the mid-nineteenth century.

However the cult of the 'radical artisan', culture-hero of Thompsonian new-left historiography of the 1960s and 1970s, did not go unchallenged. Orthodox Marxists such as Perry Anderson took issue with E. P. Thompson's claim that the cultural traditions of the artisanate were a sufficient basis for the English working class to be 'made' by the 1830s. Handloom-weavers and other artisans lost their rearguard battles against the triumph of industrial capitalism. Chartism was defeated. The relative passivity of British labour in the mid-Victorian decades was interpreted as stemming from the demise of radical craft groups, the low levels of consciousness of factory proletarians and of casual and 'sweated' big city workers and from the 'incorporation' of a labour-aristocracy.

Such a perception that labour history should be viewed not in terms of continuities and of a steady, linear growth in levels of consciousness and organization but in terms of deep discontinuities has been heightened by awareness of the massive industrial, technological and social changes experienced in the West since the mid 1970s, by the brutal devastation of entire communities of coalminers, shipyard workers and of steel and textile-workers, and by the decline of 'Fordist' assembly-line production. The impact of G. Noiriel's personal experiences of the death throes of the huge Lorraine steel industry and the agonies of working-class communities there as their industries were 'rationalized' is evident in his work. Such brutal ruptures are, he suggests, an endemic feature of the entire history of the French 'working class'. Hence the strategic confusions, dilemmas and defeats of the labour movement between the 1870s and the 1930s have to be explained, he claims, in structural terms. The old radical artisan culture was undermined by technological change. And the semi-skilled proletariat created by the Second Industrial Revolution took decades to forge the workplace and comunity solidarities

required for the generation of a class consciousness capable of sustaining an effective labour movement. Once this new working class did come of age, during the bitter battles of the Popular Front and the Resistance, it provided a mass base for the Communist party until it was, in turn, undermined by recent massive structural economic change.

Noiriel's approach may, of course, underestimate the extent to which certain values can be transmitted from generation to generation or to 'new' workers such as rural migrants despite major changes in the structures or location of industry. I recall being shown round the museum of the silk industry in Lyon in the 1970s by a friend who was then a Communist shop steward at the Rhône-Poulenc chemical plant. He talked with pride of his grandfather who had been a radical silkweaver in the Croix-Rousse, Lyon's classic radical artisan *quartier*. My ex father-in-law was a rural migrant from the Poitou who, upon joining the Communist-led CGT postmen's union in Noisy-le-Grand in the 'red-belt' of eastern Paris in the 1960s had been provided by his union with cut-price editions of books on the history of the Paris Commune. Yet Noiriel is, surely, correct to warn that one should beware of viewing the history of the labour movement as an 'onward-and-upward' progression in which each generation steadily builds on the solid achievements of its predecessor. Equally valuable in his insistence that the working class is never 'made', but instead endlessly in flux.

Furthermore, as recent analyses of the heterogenity of the labour force have suggested, the uneven development of French capitalism makes any attempt to postulate a simple, unilinear, transition from an 'artisanal' to an 'industrial' labour force extremely hazardous. The growth of urbanization and of industrial capitalism may, at certain times, actually increase the demand for some types of craft labour. Since France also retained, until the late nineteenth century, a sizeable rural outwork sector, French 'industry' remained a complex mosaic. The labour force included workshop artisans, 'proto-industrial' workers and sweated domestic workers as well as proletarians employed in large metallurgical plants, coalmines and textile mills. Since the 'working class' was so diverse it becomes difficult to attempt to infer attitudes and levels of consciousness simply by reading these off from one dominant mode of production.

Indeed it has recently become fashionable in labour history to reassert the 'autonomy of politics'. J. Rancière has argued that in their obsession to detail the minutiae of workers' job experiences social historians have lost sight of the possibility that the workplace may not, after all, provide the key determinants of workers' attitudes. The turbulent history of popular protest in the mid nineteenth century (1830–4; 1848–51; 1876–1) should, perhaps, be interpreted as a consequence of workers heightened aspirations as citizens – itself a product of their participation in the conflicts of the 'bourgeois revolution'. Similarly, one cannot understand the appeal of Communism to French workers in this century without some appreciation of the political experiences of the two world wars.

Rancière has, indeed, gone further than this. He has suggested that the whole notion of 'the working class' has to be viewed as a fictional construct, the product of a 'discourse' – or a series of discourses – about workers conducted largely by bourgeois writers and by *déraciné* worker intellectuals. Although the present author

feels singularly ill-at-ease in the Foucaultesque universe of post-modernism some attempt has been made to sketch out the central implications of such attempts to 'deconstruct' working-class history.

An equally fundamental, and ultimately more serious, challenge to the old orthodoxies of labour history has been mounted by the new feminist historiography. This has emphasized that women always made up at least one-third of the French non-agricultural labour force – a fact easily overlooked when the focus of labour history remained socialist or trade-union organizations whose iconography always favoured images of muscular coalminers or *métallos*. It has questioned those stereotypes which sought to explain the allegedly minor role of women workers in labour protest by their 'apathy', 'religiosity' or 'natural conservatism'. It has drawn attention to the uncomfortable truth that many of the skilled craftsmen engaged in 'heroic' struggles to resist 'dilution' were patriarchal male chauvinists eager to remove women from the labour force and to confine them to the home. Hence any history of the 'working class' must take some attempt, however inadequate, not merely to discuss the specific problems of female workers but – more fundamentally – to debate the claim, one made by Engels, that within the working-class family the husband was the bourgeois, the wife the proletarian.

Another recent trend in French labour historiography has been the welcome, if belated, recognition that, from the moment of its 'birth', the 'French' working class contained a sizeable proportion of immigrants – a proportion which rose steadily as falling birth rates and the demographic losses of World War One impelled employers to look abroad for blue-collar workers. By the twentieth century industrial France was an ethnic melting pot. And ethnic tensions within the working class have long been a major obstacle to labour organizers.

In short, much of the old interpretative framework within which labour history has been written is either collapsing or has already collapsed. Faced with the long-term secular decline of historic labour movements throughout the West radical historians are being forced not merely to question the teleology which linked the rise of socialism to the forward march of an increasingly mature and class-conscious proletariat but to cast doubt on the whole concept of 'the working class'. It may, doubtless, appear perverse and quixotic to choose, in such circumstances, to write a general book which attempts to analyse the development of militancy and class consciousness amongst French workers. Undoubtedly the 'objective' class formation of the French proletariat was slow. The class proved singularly reluctant to identify with any one single political or trade-union organization. Sectional, gender, ethnic, and cultural divisions helped to produce ideological heterogeneity. Nevertheless, it remains true that Marx's conversion to the idea that workers could be the revolutionary carriers of the socialist project stemmed, at least in part, from his personal contacts with the precociously mature militancy of French workers in the 1840s.

Moreover, French workers continued, at regular intervals, to behave in ways which, to put it mildly, disturbed the complacency of the dominant bourgeoisie. No amount of revisionist rewriting of history can explain away 1848, the Paris Commune, revolutionary syndicalism, the strike waves of 1917–20 and of 1936, the rise of a mass Communist party. The purpose of this book is to seek to analyse

and explain the trajectory of labour militancy between the Revolution of 1830 and World War Two. A reviewer of my one previous book described me as a Marxist-Leninist. My close acquaintances, who are better informed, consider me an unreconstructed follower of Ned Ludd. I have tried, as far as possible, not to allow this quixotic ideological loyalty to interfere with my historical judgements.

Introduction

1

The Formation of the French Working Class, 1800–1870

The focus of this study is on class consciousness, class militancy and class organization – and on the obstacles to these. And the particular concern of this section of the book is to analyse why the French 'working class' became the most volatile and politically radical social group in Europe in the period up to the Paris Commune of 1871.

However, much of the recent historiography has emphasized the social history of the embryonic working class, rather than concentrating on the labour movement as such. As G. Noiriel has argued, it has tended to rely more on 'hard' quantitative evidence than on 'soft' literary sources. It has tended to dispel both older stereotypes of workers as slaves to factory machines, dwelling in slums on starvation wages and the later orthodoxy of a labour force dominated by skilled but threatened craft workers. Instead a picture has emerged of a highly heterogeneous labour force, performing a wide variety of jobs in different types and sizes of enterprises and living in widely varying milieux (Noiriel 1990).

One of the apparently paradoxical generalizations which has emerged is that during the decades which coincided with the apogee of popular radicalism, from the 1830 Revolution to the 1871 Commune, statistics suggest a high degree of stability in the structures of the non-agricultural workforce. The exodus from agriculture remained slow. In 1861 only 11.7 per cent of the population lived outside their department of birth. The growth in the absolute numbers of non-agricultural workers and of their relative weight in the overall labour force was steady rather than rapid – and appears to have slowed down after 1860 as the railway boom of the 1850s ended and as the economy was hit by the Franco-Prussian war and then by the impact of the Great Depression.

Percentage of 'active' population in industry

1800	15
1856	26.8
1881	26.7

Numbers of industrial workers

1800	1.9
1840	3.5
1848	4.4
1866	4.2
1876	4.5

These statistics suggest that after decades of expansion until the 1850s the numbers of non-agricultural workers scarcely grew at all for several decades – even if there was a significant change in the internal structure balance of the industrial work-force. The 'artisan', working at home or in a small workshop, remained a key figure in the economy. 'Artisans' made up some 40 per cent of the labour force in the 1820s, and still some 35 per cent in the 1860s. In contrast, workers in factories and mines totalled barely 1 million in the early 1850s.

Textiles and clothing remained by far the two largest sectors. Together they employed around 60 per cent of non-agricultural workers in 1810, 58 per cent in the 1840s and 50 per cent as late as 1866. The proportion of workers employed in mining and metallurgy did grow – but at a very modest pace. Metalworkers comprised some 10 per cent of industrial workers in 1840, 14 per cent by 1866. The comparable figures for the mining sector were 2 per cent in 1840, 3 per cent in 1866. By the latter date France had 68,000 miners, 31,000 chemical workers. The metal industries employed 339,000 – but this figure included not only workers in a handful of large iron foundries and engineering and armaments plants, but also those in thousands of tiny workshops. Meanwhile, textiles and clothing employed 1.42 million, the building industry 376,000 and the wood trades 284,000.

Of course, all of these statistics should be treated with a good deal of scepticism. As the leading cognoscenti such as Toutain and Marcezewski have warned, they are, at best, highly approximate. Almost all local historians draw attention to the flaws in employment censuses such as that undertaken in the late 1840s. This was published in 1848–52, but was based on data collected over several years. Lévêque has noted, for example, that in Burgundy the census omitted boat-builders (Lévêque 1983). Definitions often varied from one census to the next, making it difficult to establish clear statistical tends. Fishermen were sometimes classified as 'transport' workers, sometimes as 'food' workers. It is usually difficult to distinguish between small-masters and journeymen. Such a lack of clear distinction may, in itself, be significant – indicating the absence in many trades of any perceived social gulf between these two groups. Sometimes changes in classificiation may produce highly misleading results. J. Gaillard has argued that the apparent decline in the numbers of artisans in Paris during the Second Empire may well be a mere statistical illusion (Gaillard 1977). And it might be suggested that the apparent decline in the number of workers between 1848 and 1866, years of substantial economic modernization and production growth, is highly implausible.

Moreover, Joan Scott's analysis of the Parisian Chamber of Commerce's survey of the city's employment structure in 1848 emphasizes the ways in which 'objective' statistics – the raw material for neo-positivist historiography – may themselves be a distorted product of ideological bias (Scott 1986). In order to offer an image of

underlying stability – in a year of political and social turmoil – the report categorized many pracarious handicraft workers as 'self-employed' or as 'small employers'. By implication, therefore, they were portrayed as potential thrusting small entrepreneurs rather than as under-employed journeymen who were liable to ally with the radical labour movement. It treated women workers as if they were all part of a family economy, disguising the fact that the city contained thousands of women workers who were forced to try to make ends meet on their own inadequate wages.

The statistics of such official *enquêtes* are, clearly, much too neat. They tend to 'freeze' workers at a given moment in time. Yet such a snapshot gives an illusion of stability to the labour force which may bear little relationship to social realities. Many jobs were notoriously seasonal. All industries were subject to cyclical slumps. A worker might, thus, frequently do a variety of jobs in the course of few months. Workers' autobiographies such as that of N. Truquin emphasize the frequency with which workers might change employment (Truquin 1977). Whilst still in his mid teens Truquin had done odd jobs for scrap-metal dealers, been apprenticed to a master woolcomber and worked in a large, modern Amiens textile-mill. After involvement in the 1848 Revolution he was deported to Algeria, where he worked as a servant for an army officer, did jobs in a brothel, and thought of taking up farming. Returning to France in the 1850s he was employed as a building navvy before becoming a silk-weaver. A similar picture emerges from Accampo's study of the small Loire industrial town of St Chamond. Many of the nail-makers – a high proportion of the workforce before the advent of factory industry – also worked as navvies, masons, carters and *cafetiers* (Accampo 1989).

French industry employed a high percentage both of female and of child labour in the worst paid and least prestigious jobs. In 1866 more than 30 per cent of industrial workers – 1.2 million – were female, a proportion which was to rise to almost 40 per cent by 1914. In the 1840s 12 per cent of the workforce was children under the age of 16 – though by the early 1870s this had fallen to some 7 per cent.

The impact of industrialization on the working-class family has provoked intense debate among social historians, as it did amongst contemporary social observers. Some have tended to share the pessimistic assessment of those nineteenth-century workers who lamented the supposed disruption of workers' family culture caused by the advent of paid labour for women and children outside the household. Others have claimed that such changes, by opening up the possibility of an independent wage packet for working-class girls and women, paved the way for greater economic and sexual freedom and, eventually, for women's legal and political emancipation (Shorter 1973). However, Joan Scott and Louise Tilly have suggested that those changes which occurred have been over-estimated – that neither female nor child labour were new; that women tended to do many of the same jobs as in the past; and that the family often made a series of adjustments to its strategy which allowed much of the traditional family economic unity to survive across the nineteenth century (Scott and Tilly 1978).

As recent 'proto-industrial' historiography has emphasized, the family household unit was the bedrock of the pre-factory economy in both peasant and artisanal worlds. Women were an integral part of the family workforce. According to Sega-

len, the crucial economic functions performed by the wife in peasant farms and in rural proto-industry may well have given her a high status despite her legal disabilities (Segalen 1980). Not only did peasant women look after children, run the household, and tend the pigs and poultry, but they worked in the fields, took produce to market, made decisions about buying livestock and had a say in choice of the son-in-laws. Similar remarks apply, mutatis mutandis, to many artisanal, proto-industrial or retailing households. If the wife was called *la patronne* in the Western countryside, she was *la bourgeoise* in Parisian popular *quartiers*. The social-Catholic observer, Le Play, cited examples from the 1850s of Parisian carpenters' wives who kept accounts and handed out spending money to their husbands. Artisans' wives would help on the looms, market products. By the early nineteenth century peasant women in the Pays de Caux (Normandy) were involved in cottage weaving and spinning whilst their husbands worked in the fields (Gullickson 1981).

Women were, thus, an essential part of a successful peasant farm or artisanal workshop. A young peasant or journeyman could only envisage taking over a farm or a workshop if he had a competent wife to lend support. Such systems of household production made it possible to combine work with child-rearing. And children were put to work from an early age. Without romanticizing such a system – which clearly involved much drudgery, child labour and, frequently, living and sleeping in the same room as one worked – one might argue that it was one in which the wife's status could be quite high. Wife and husband did similar, or complementary, tasks. Both were equally important members of the team. And children could be looked after, disciplined and taught skills within the family.

Though the advent of the industrial capitalism did increase opportunities for paid work outside the home for women, and for children, this was much more the case in textile mill towns such as Lille, Roubaix or Mulhouse than in mining or metal-working areas. Until the last decades of the century women made up around half of all textile workers, but only 5 per cent of metal-workers. In mining areas a few women worked down the pits, more had jobs sorting coal at the pithead – but most miners' wives were confined to the home where they might take in lodgers or laundry. The majority of women, even in textiles, worked within the home or in a variety of 'traditional' jobs – as seamstresses in the sweated garment trade, as laundresses and as domestic servants.

'Optimists' such as E. Shorter have viewed the 'modernization' of women's work by factory industry as a key to sexual and economic emancipation. Working-class girls and married women were, it is claimed, able to become less dependent on patriarchal fathers and husbands. Daughters became less bound by conventions of arranged marriages and by traditional sexual controls. Their freedom to find their own sexual partners was symbolized by rising rates of illegitimate births in industrial areas. Whereas illegitimacy rates below 5 per cent had been the norm, these rose to nearly 20 per cent in some factory textile towns – and to 11 per cent even in a small, relatively conservative and Catholic town like St Chamond (Loire).

Such optimistic interpretations have received short shrift from Shorter's critics. The supposed link between female wage earning and wider emancipation is not particularly plausible in the French case. In France a higher percentage of the

industrial labour force was female than in either Britain or Germany, yet French women secured the vote only in 1945!

Strumhinger's analysis of working women in Lyon provides little support to those who regard rising illegitimacy rates as symptomatic of 'progress' (Strumhinger 1977). In the silk industry journeymen weavers had tended to marry at the point where they hoped to establish their own workshop. However, when, by the 1830s, this small workshop sector came under increasing economic pressure, marriage patterns began to disintegrate. The growth in the proportion of illegitimate children in the city stemmed from the continuation of the earlier pattern of premarital sexual relations between courting couples, but in a context where the difficulties of establishing a household workshop were growing. Of course some such couples may have lived together in *concubinage* as a de facto family unit. But many girls were left to try to raise illegitimate infants on their own. Doubts may legitimately be expressed as to how far they felt liberated by this experience.

Meanwhile the new large mills, which emerged to prepare and spin silk, employed single young women who were lodged in dormitories and were subjected to very tight discipline by nuns – both at work and in their leisure time. This type of religious control, one of the Catholic church's many contributions to industrial discipline in the early industrial period, provided a substitute for family regulation. Often the girls' fathers, peasants in the surrounding uplands, signed contracts with the silk employers. Their daughters were lodged and fed but their wages were sent back to the peasant household.

This system illustrates a central point in the thesis of Scott and Tilly – that many of the values of the old family economic unit persisted into the changing environment of the industrial age, even if in time they were gradually eroded as children migrated over longer distances in search of work and came to assert the right to control their own wages. In much of the northern factory textile sector, such as in the linen industry of Armentières, the family still functioned as a work unit within the mill (Reddy 1984). The father worked alongside his children, acted as work supervisor and received the family wage packet. In such industries the wife worked until she had children – then spent years in the home tending the household, with her children taking her place as supplementary wage earners in the mills. But whether as daughter or as wife she would rarely be in a position to regard her wages as her own, to spend as she chose. Moreover, even 'independent' women workers tended to be employed in jobs viewed as 'unskilled' or to be paid wages barely half those of men employed in similar occupations. The chances of 'women alone' being in a position to lodge, feed and clothe themselves were very small. A few 'spinster clusterings' were formed by single women haberdashers in Paris or silk-workers in Lyon – in which resources were pooled and mutual aid given. But in the mid nineteenth century, as in the eighteenth, that 10 per cent or so of women – spinsters, orphans, divorcees, widows – who did live alone were forced to resort to an 'economy of makeshifts' and, all too often, to petty crime and prostitution.

The position of the working-class wife and mother in factory towns became highly problematic. If she tried to contribute to the family income by working in the mill – and a much higher percentage of women did so in France than in Britain

– then she faced the problem of combining this with childcare and household tasks. The 'double burden', thus, became more onerous. Moreover, her wage was certain to be visibly less than that of her husband. If she stayed in the house and played the role of manager of the family budget, 'saver' and home-maker, she now faced a situation where her husband was the 'wage earner' and in which she was dependent on his goodwill in handing over the pay-packet for the family's needs. The tensions engendered in the working-class household by the male tendency to squander wages on café socializing became a commonplace of nineteenth-century observation. In addition, the male-dominated café became the focus of working-class political discussion and organization from which women – lacking the vote and rarely unionized – were marginalized.

The crisis in working-class family life which the transition from household to workshop to factory economy could bring have been emphasized in Accampo's study of St Chamond – a Loire town which grew from 4,000 to 14,000 inhabitants in the middle decades of the century (Accampo 1989). Until the 1840s it was dominated by artisanal silk-weaving and nail-making. The family acted as a work unit – particularly in the weaving sector. Wives helped to prepare the looms, and children were trained in the craft from an early age. In 1825 75 per cent of the sons of workers in the town followed in their parents' trade. The age of marriage – 28 for men, 24 for women – was lower than in the surrounding countryside. But, since the wife's work was essential for the functioning of the workshop, weavers were already practising birth control – tending to have a cluster of children early in marriage but then to seek to avoid further births once the wife was into her thirties. Moreover, infants were sent out to wet-nurses in the countryside, a practice widespread amongst both Paris and Lyon artisan families, where many died (Sussman 1975).

Already weavers' autonomy was being reduced by the advent of more sophisticated looms. The weaving pattern was now controlled by a punched-card prepared by 'readers' and 'sketchers', who took over some of the weaver's previous functions. But by the 1840s the industry was in sharp decline, unable to compete with Lyon and St Etienne. By the 1850s the town's economy had been transformed, its workshops replaced by braid mills, employing a largely female labour force, and by large-scale metallurgical plants. The workers in the latter were largely male migrants. Some nail-workers went into the new factories but the craft-proud silk-weavers often preferred to move to Lyon in search of work in their own trade.

Industrial capitalism caused severe disruption to the family structure of the town. Women's jobs were now located in the braid mills. The problem of reconciling these with childcare was acute. Male wages in the metallurgical sector were too low to support a family without some contribution from the wife, not least because cyclical fluctuations in the metal industry often threw men out of work, as did industrial accidents and job-related diseases. In 1870 over half of the 3,700 female wage earners in the town were above 21 years of age, most of them married women. Family strategies were forced to change. Birth control practices became more widespread. On average women had their last child three years younger than had been the case before 1840 – despite the fact that many of the new working class came from Catholic villages with high fertility. The average age at marriage

rose. The decline in the birth rate came much earlier than, for example, in the northern woollen town of Roubaix, where it stood at a very high 40 per 1,000 in 1870 and only fell – by around one-third – towards the end of the century. In such textile towns factory jobs for children made birth control appear less necessary.

In St Chamond the decline in the birth rate stemmed not from growing working-class affluence or from aspirations for a better standard of living, but from the pressures created by the new industrial situation. The attempt to combine maternity with work in the braid mill led to a rise in the number of still births. Infant and child mortality remained very high. And the cohesion of the working-class family was weakened. Fathers no longer transmitted knowhow to their offspring. They were absent for most of the day in the metalworks or in the café and came home only to eat and sleep. Mothers who worked in the braid mill has less time and energy to tend and train their children. The entire working-class population suffered from the effects of housing shortages, unhealthy working conditions, polluted water, inadequate sewage facilities. The net result of this weakening of the working-class family was not to free women from patriarchalism but to put workers under the control of 'paternalist' Catholic employers who assumed a 'patriarchal' role by controlling not only employment but charity, mutual aid societies and social activities.

Accampo also makes qualifications to the recent orthodoxy on the impact of migration on workers' culture. The work of W. Sewell, L. Moch and Y. Lequin has tended to argue against the idea that migration necessarily meant *déracinement* and social dislocation (Sewell 1985; Moch 1983; Lequin 1977). Migrants, they claimed, tended to move short distances to nearby towns along routes mapped out for them by kin and village neighbours and to benefit, once installed there, from kinship networks which gave support, found them jobs and housing and provided familiar forms of sociability. Such optimism appears misplaced in the case of St Chamond. The rural migrants who came to the metallurgical industry had few such support systems and faced totally new working conditions. Problems which they experienced in adjusting to their new environment made the forging of working-class cultural solidarities more difficult.

The prevalence of child labour raised further problems for the embryonic labour movement. Twelve per cent of all industrial workers in 1840 were under 16 years of age. However, the orthodoxies which suggested that industry was inundated by child labour and that appalling working conditions imposed on these youngsters were responsible both for a deterioration in the health of working-class families and for disintegration of working-class culture need nuanced qualificiation (Haywood 1981, 1988; Pierrard 1987; Braun and Valénas 1989). Although some children were employed in mine ventilation and underground haulage, overall the mining industry, together with metallurgy, engineering and construction relied heavily on adult male labour. Urban children did a variety of odd jobs, running errands or working for scrap dealers. Young girls were trained, both by their mothers and in Catholic primary schools, to sew in preparation for jobs as seamstresses. Above all, of course, it was the factory textile sector which offered a new type of employment. Small, supple children were ideal for crawling under machinery and for mending broken threads. By the 1840s nearly 40 per cent of Alsace

factory textile-workers were children and a similar proportion in the Nord and Normandy. But even here technological changes in the 1850s to 1860s began to eliminate many children's jobs. By 1870 only 20 per cent of the workforce in the Normandy textile industry were children, and the national proportion of children in large-scale industry was down to 7 per cent.

Observers who claimed that factory labour represented an unprecedented hell for child workers sometimes overstated their case. Children had always worked on peasant farms and in artisanal workshops, and such employment was often exhausting, unhealthy and dangerous. Truquin found working in an Amiens wool factory a pleasant change after his experiences in a wool-combing workshop where he was bullied by the master and was so tired from the long work hours that he would bang his head on the wall to stay awake (Truquin 1977). Some bourgeois reformers and army officers became alarmed about the small size, physical deformities and ill health of conscripts from factory towns. Yet research by Annaliste historians has failed to find any clear correlation between child factory labour and undersized conscripts. Some rural departments had just as many conscripts rejected on the grounds of ill health or small stature. And conscripts from Alsace textile towns were healthier and taller than those from the Nord. Urban death rates are difficult to calculate, because a proportion of those who died in towns were recent migrants from the countryside – whilst infant mortality rates there fail to take account of urban-born babies who died whilst in the care of wet-nurses in the countryside. It is difficult to determine whether high child mortality rates in industrial towns stemmed from child labour or from premature weaning, diet deficiencies, from adulterated food or simply from poor housing or environmental pollution.

Some 'miserabilist' views of working-class family disintegration may, equally, be exaggerated. Ninety-five per cent of children in the Haut-Rhin in 1851 lived at home. A high percentage of child workers continued to be employed alongside their parents or close kin. And parents continued to play a major role in transmitting general knowhow to their offspring.

Yet, when all the qualifications of neo-positivist historiography have been duly noted, it is still difficult to deny that the half century after 1820 was a bleak age for working-class children. Things got worse before they started to get better. Working-class families needed the wages from child labour to balance their budgets. Children did become deformed from doing long hours in repetitive jobs in unhealthy surroundings. Their wages were extremely low, often half those of women workers. Factory jobs were more intense and less varied than those in agriculture or domestic workshops. There was less chance to run errands, to get a breath of fresh air. Discipline was harsh. The industrial court (Conseil des Prud'hommes) of Vienne (Isère) noted laconically that 'the workers who direct children can only do so by blows: but there are no acts of inhumanity'. Pierrard has detailed the catalogue of industrial accidents in Lille to children caught in moving machinery as they sought to clean it (Pierrard 1965). In the early 1850s one death in every three in the Mulhouse working class was from TB. Employers insisted that child labour was vital if French industry were to remain competitive. It was seen as cheap and docile. Worries about the fitness of conscripts and the humanitarian concern of some philanthropists led to the 1841 Child Labour Act

which sought to set a minimum age of eight years, to ban nightwork for children under 13 years and to insist on some educational provision. But the Act was systematically evaded. Its unpaid inspectors were, all too often, influenced by local employers? Fines, when enforced, were derisory. Parents joined with employers in undermining enforcement? Factory employers complained that they were penalized because workshops of under 20 workers were not covered by the Act. Their spokesmen mocked the 'false sensitivity' of humanitarians, insisted that children were made healthy by work and that factory discipline was an essential basis for social control. Only gradually did a minority of employers begin to insist that productivity of child labour was low, that the long-term vitality of French industry would be better served by a healthier workforce which had spent its early years acquiring basic literacy and numeracy which would make it more efficient. But such views became widespread only after 1870.

One obvious contrast between France and Britain in the nineteenth century was in the level and pace of urbanization. In 1850 39 per cent of the British population lived in towns of more than 10,000 inhabitants, in France only 14 per cent (Merriman 1982). Moreover, most of the largest French cities, Bordeaux for example, were essentially commercial, administrative, military or religious centres. Six of the ten largest British towns in 1850 were industrial, but only four of the biggest 25 French towns were clearly factory towns. Certainly by the 1840s Lille (75,000), St Etienne (50,000) and Roubaix (31,000) resembled miniature versions of Salford or Bradford, whilst the Nord and the Stephenois regions were scaled down versions of Lancashire and Yorkshire. There were older centres of craft industry such as Rheims or Vienne which had established artisanal *quartiers* and strong neighbourhood solidarities – features conspicuously absent from newer, single-industry company towns like Le Creusot where all public space and social facilities tended to be dominated by the management. Industrial suburbs did emerge on the outskirts of Paris (Belleville) Lyon (La Guillotière). Already in the July Monarchy the Paris prefect warned Louis Philippe that the authorities were 'allowing the capital to be blocked by 100 factories. Sire, this will be the cord which will strangle you one day'. Fears of the 'dangerous classes', compounded by frequent Parisian popular uprisings – and also by the grim warnings of French travellers who ventured to explore darkest Lancashire – may, indeed, have led some of the elite to believe that, wherever possible, French industrial developments should be dispersed in the countryside.

Indeed the protracted survival, in some sectors the actual expansion, of rural industry was one of the most significant characteristics of the French economy. This had advantages for employers and workers alike. Merchant-capitalists were spared the expense of capital investment in factories and machinery. During cyclical slumps they had less plant lying idle. Rural workers often retained plots of land on which to grow food and could, thus, accept lower pay rates. During recessions they had some agricultural resources on which to fall back. Their dispersal made them less likely to organize strikes. Hence Lyonnais silk-merchants pursued a conscious strategy of dispersing work in the countryside to weaken the power of the artisanate of Lyon itself.

Between 1820 and 1860 mechanization of cotton and woollen spinning multi-

plied the numbers of rural weavers. In the 1840s 80 per cent of textile-workers in the vicinity of Rheims and Mulhouse or in Calvados were rural out-workers. Whereas in Britain handloom weaving had been largely eliminated by the 1840s, 70 per cent of France's 280,000 looms in 1860 were still handlooms. As M. Segalen had shown in her study of one Normandy village, rural weavers formed their own communities, intermarried, had their own culture and were vigorous defenders of their 'independence' (Segalen 1972). They tended to drink on 'Saint Monday' and to prefer leisure to the lure of earning additional money by working longer hours. They staunchly resisted attempts to push them into the factories, and were the despair of would-be modernizers who lamented their 'indolence'. In many regions weaving remained an essentially male occupation, whereas factory spinning attracted peasant women and children. In the Pays de Caux (Normandy) women increasingly monopolized rural textile work whilst their menfolk worked in agriculture (Gullickson 1981).

Many other industrial sectors retained a sizeable rural presence. Charcoal-based rural metal forces were commonplace, until the 1850s, in the Cher, Champagne and the Ariège. Around Montbéliard Japy employed thousands of rural watch-makers. Some of this rural industry suffered badly in the 1846 Depression. The 1860 Free-Trade Treaty with Britain exposed Normandy textile out-work to foreign competition. But in many regions the terminal decline of rural industries came only with the Great Depression of the 1880s. Until then the widespread, intricate and enduring symbiosis between industrial and agricultural labour persisted (Grafreaux 1983; Colin et al. 1980). The relative scarcity of coal and its awkward location made continued use of rural water power economically rational.

The village of Coutevoie, near the textile town of Roanne (Loire), may be taken to illustrate this phenomenon (Béluze 1987). Peasant-weavers used textile out-work to avoid the alternatives of full-time agricultural labour or migration. The percentage of heads of households classified as weavers rose from 19 per cent to 24 per cent (96 to 137) between 1846 and 1876. Usually wives and children, too, were involved in textile work. During slumps, weavers sought work as road navvies. During the Second Empire they worked for large Roanne *fabricants* and their wages provided custom for village tailors, shoemakers and *cafetiers*. From the 1830s they were referred to by the municipal council as *ouvriers*, and they rarely intermarried with the peasant-proprietors who were the village elite. But they called themselves 'peasants'. Only in the 1890s were they finally forced to seek work in a mechanized mill established in the village.

The existence of this sizeable stratum of rural workers clearly complicates any attempt to categorize the emerging 'working class' into two neat compartments – factory 'proletarians' and skilled 'artisans'. By the 1850s, perhaps one in four of France's 4 million or so industrial workers were employed in factories or mines. Some Nord or Alsace textile mills employed 300 or more workers. A handful of metallurgical firms, such as Le Creusot, numbered their workforce in thousands. But the average size of a 'factory' remained fairly small. Recent historiography has sought to qualify the 'black legend' of rustic migrants, with no industrial experience, struggling in vain to maintain some vestiges of their culture and family unity in a grim world of satanic mills and filthy slums. The 'objectivity' of witnesses who

painted such portraits has been questioned. Some, like Villeneuve-Bargemont, were Legitimists – paternalistic social-Catholics for whom exposure of the harshness of industrial capitalism was a useful weapon against bourgeois liberal political opponents. Many commentaries on factory labour and proletarian life were based, in part, on misconceptions. Many factory textile-workers were not demoralized migrants drawn from agriculture but were recruited from families with experience of rural industry (Reddy 1984). Fifty-nine per cent of fathers of factory-spinners in the Normandy town of Darnétal in 1820 had been rural weavers. Organization of work and payments systems in the early mills often resembled those of rural out-work, with the entire family hired as a work team. Similarly, large metallurgical firms tended to recruit men with experience of rural forge work.

Furthermore, the supposed dichotomy between 'artisanal', workshop-based, crafts and factory jobs can be exaggerated. W. Sewell has shown that between 1821 and 1869 the proportion of factory-based skilled operatives in the Marseilles workforce rose from 4.4 per cent to 8.1 per cent (Sewell 1985). Boiler-makers, cotton-printers, machine-makers and glass-blowers were all skilled men who worked within the factory system.

However, it was from the ranks of workshop-based 'artisans' that a disproportionate number of militants of the early labour movement were to be drawn. Three important trends which affected this sector of the labour force need to be emphasized.

(1) After the loss of colonies during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, entrepreneurs sought to consolidate a niche for France in world markets by concentrating on 'quality' exports, leaving the British to supply the world with cheap cottons, pig iron and coal. This meant that skilled craftsmen were still highly valuable to such industries as silk, porcelain, gloves, furniture and jewellery. If America's role was to feed the world and England's to clothe it, the French could embellish it by the skills and good taste of their craftsmen (Walton 1989).

Hence Zeitlin has emphasized the flexible adaptation of the *fabriques collectifs* of the Lyonnais-Stephenois region (Zeitlin 1985). Here the silk sector responded to changing market demands, produced a mixture of quality silk and of cheaper 'mixed' fabrics. Work was carried out in factories (silk preparation; spinning; dyeing), in rural proto-industry (plain weaving), and in urban artisan workshops (quality weaving).

(2) The economic boom and urban growth of the 1850s to 1860s provided opportunities for 'artisanal' workers to supply goods and services to the expanding middle classes and petty-bourgeoisie of the big cities. The internal market for quality goods relied on the aesthetic tastes of bourgeois housewives who were more concerned with style and quality than with low price. As late as the 1860s nearly 60 per cent of all 'industrial' production in France was, thus, still from 'artisans' some of them, of course, village workers producing merely for local markets.

(3) The final characteristics of artisanal industries were less encouraging for those

who worked in them. The survival of the 'artisanate' came at the price of accepting increasing subordination to merchant-capitalists who put out orders, supplied raw materials, marketed finished products. Many artisans were forced to work longer hours for lower piecerates to compete with factory production or with rural outwork. The growth of ready-made and standardized production for sale to lower middle-class consumers pushed hatters, shoe-makers, tailors and furniture-makers into doing simple, repetitive, subdivided tasks. They had to jettison old work practices, cut back on apprentice training, abandon the traditional satisfaction which came from making the whole product. Building craftsmen became dependent on subcontractors working for large building firms. Printers faced the challenge from new typesetting machines. Even where craftsmen still owned their own tools and worked in their own workshops they were being subordinated in countless ways to the bourgeoisie, even if this remained more mercantile than properly industrial.

Much of this volume will attempt to analyse the variety of ways in which artisans utilized their resources – of skill, literacy, community-solidarity and revolutionary political heritage – to combat the threats to their work culture and identity.

A number of questions clearly suggest themselves. Why did French workers cling so obstinately to rural out-work or to artisanal trades? Why were they so reluctant to enter mills, iron foundries, coalmines? And why was their resistance to chance so prolonged and so successful?

One might argue that in an uncertain world of fluctuating markets, seasonal unemployment and cyclical slumps, preservation of a system of 'pluri-activity' provided some measure of security. In the Vosges men worked in rural *broderie*, whilst their wives tended vegetable patches. In the Périgord or Champagne rural forge-workers clung tenaciously to their small plots of land. Similar patterns existed amongst Troyes bonnet-makers. In Provence peasants combined part-time work in olive-oil mills with farming. In Picardy smallholders supplemented agricultural resources by employment in beet-sugar refineries. In the Carmaux coalmine (Tarn) two-thirds of the workforce in the 1860s were still peasant smallholders who remained resistant both to management sticks (time-keeping fines) and carrots (bonus productivity payments) by disappearing to work their farms in the afternoons, to get in the harvest or to celebrate traditional festivals (Trempé 1974).

Moreover, life in a village, or in an old-established artisanal *quartier*, offered to workers a sense of independence, a feeling that they had some control of social space. To move to a factory or company town was, they felt, to abandon this autonomy. Small shopkeepers and café owners were friends, neighbours, allies in a way that those who ran company stores could never be. Pottery workers in Nevers in the 1860s still clung to work in or near their homes in the familiar surroundings of old-established popular *quartiers* – prompting the exasperated Louis Reybaud to claim that they had a perverse liking for filth and squalor (Perrot 1985).

One peculiarity which set France apart from other industrializing nations in the nineteenth century was the precocious fall in the birth rate. This meant that gradually pressures for exodus from the countryside eased. Industrial employers faced localized problems in recruiting workers from the countryside. One consequence was thèy they were forced to recruit more extensively amongst *married*

women. In Britain half of all women in the active labour force were under 25 years of age, in France only one-third. The relatively small size of the indigenous reserve army of labour led, also, to an increasing tendency to recruit immigrants. It also gave French workers something of a trump card on the labour market. By preserving a flexible mixture of income from small plots, augmented by seasonal employment both in agriculture and industry, they had the possibility of escaping from exploitative landowners into industry – or from exploitative industrialists back to the land. This contained agricultural option 'constituted as it were the French proletarian's unemployment compensation, his poor house' (Cotterean 1985). As A. Cottereau has shown, sections of the labour force were able to defend themselves without recourse to strikes or to joining a 'labour movement'.

In Britain, shoe-makers, when faced with the threat of competititon from sweated out-work, came to accept that they would have to work in factories and on machines. They then tried to form unions to defend wage rates. As late as 1890 57 per cent of French shoe-makers were still outside the factory system. In the western shoe-making industry, centred on Fougères, there was no union until 1887. Instead, shoe-workers retained their agricultural ties and used these to mount resistance to employer demands. If employers sought to cut wages or raise productivity they simply withdrew temporarily from the shoe industry and took up agricultural work (Cottereau 1989). Similar strategies can be observed amongst glove-makers around Grenoble. Thus workers who appear by the usual criteria of labour historiography (strike rates; unionization levels) to be unorganized and 'apathetic' had, in fact, their own idiosyncratic resistance strategies. There was, Cottereau concludes, 'a particularly acute disjuncture' between such 'informal contacts' and the organizations of the embryonic 'labour movement'. 'In France whenever production pressures came to be systematized, there arose forms of collective action that were independent of any institutionalized organization', for 'it is possible to identify, beyond formal organization, a universe of workers' control (of wages, wage-systems, hiring, work-pace) made up of unstable practices – the object of continual pressure and counter-pressure'.

Such workers clung tenaciously to their 'skills' and to their way of life. They sought to pass these on to their children. They treasured their freedom to celebrate fêtes, to take breaks in the workday whenever they felt like it. Their endemic 'indiscipline' drove would-be economic modernizers to despair. They viewed the factory with its discipline and timekeeping as a *bagne* (prison), as symbolic of a 'new feudalism' to which they had no intention of surrendering. It was in an effort to undermine this stubborn popular culture that French employers, notably those in the heavy-metallurgical and mining sectors, began to develop paternalist strategies. They hoped that by offering company housing, allotments and welfare schemes they could attract, retain and eventually mould a workforce which would be willing to trade off traditional independence for greater 'security' – at the price of social and political deference.

It is not the intention here to offer any detailed analysis of French workers' material standards in the pre–1870 period, since this will be discussed in relation to specific groups of workers later in this section. A number of broad generalizations may, however, be suggested.

Wages appear to have risen in the 1800–15 period, to have stagnated or declined in the long period of low prices between 1820 and 1850, then to have risen slowly in the next two decades (Rougerie 1968; Lhomme 1968). Grain prices were particularly high in the years 1816–17, 1826–30 and 1845–8. But the advent of the railway network and improvements in shipping made old-style grain crises less of a danger after mid century (Price 1983a). Until then, in bad years, a Nord textile worker could sometimes be forced to spend 80 per cent of his income on food. Diets appear to have actually deteriorated in the period before 1850. Up to 40 per cent of conscripts from industrial areas were diagnosed as unfit for military service, often because of diet-deficiency complaints. Unemployment was high in the building sector, widely viewed as a barometer of the economy, in 1826–7, 1831–5, 1840–3, 1847–51, 1856–8 and in the late 1860s. In the spring of 1848 60 per cent of the 340,000 workers in Paris were without a job. In the previous year 25 per cent of the population of the industrial Nord had been on poor relief. In crisis years workers had recourse to private charity, to patchy and inadequate relief from *bureaux de bienfaisance*. Some, of course, could turn to their small plot or allotments. Many could be driven to the pawnshop or the vagrancy, petty crime or prostitution.

In general, housing failed to keep pace with the growth in urban and industrial population and urban rents tended to rise. Within industry itself only a minority of employers, such as the Protestant *patronat* of Alsace, had yet come to believe that improved working conditions and shorter hours might actually improve productivity. The workday remained very long, up to 15 hours in some sectors. Industrial accidents were commonplace. Between 1867 and 1873 28 per cent of firemen and 18 per cent of drivers employed by the Nord railway company suffered accidents. Few workers were covered by accident insurance.

Local studies of income distribution emphasize the huge disparities in wealth between workers and the bourgeois elites. In Lille 90 per cent of the population controlled well under 10 per cent of the city's wealth (Codaccioni 18971). The prevalence of child labour weakened the impact of primary schooling and there were, as yet, very few white-collar posts to which literate offspring of the workers might aspire. Social mobility was, thus, highly restricted. The well-being of an individual working-class family varied, of course, at different points in the family cycle. In early marriage, before the first child arrived, or in mid marriage when children were in paid employment, survival might appear relatively easy. But when babies were too young to work, or when the parents began to age, which occurred prematurely by the time a worker was around 40, or when family members fell victim to illness, accident or unemployment prospects were grim.

In short, the material conditions of workers' lives provided ample fuel for political radicals and labour militants to exploit. It is the purpose of the remainder of this volume to analyse which section of the working class became mobilized into political or industrial protest, when and why.

2

Work and Politics in the Artisan World, 1760–1815

If Albert Soboul's monumental, pioneering monograph on the Parisian *sans-culottes* in the Year II was the flagship for the study of popular politics in the French Revolution, it was soon to be flanked by a veritable flotilla of supporting vessels. The writings of G. Rudé sought to locate popular protest within the context of notions of a 'moral economy' which questioned the values of the 'free market' and to correlate revolutionary upheavals with grain supplies and food prices. Richard Cobb explored the mentality and behaviour of the urban militants whose militias, the *armées révolutionnaires* toured the countryside in 1793–4 requisitioning grain and seeking to persuade or intimidate village populations into abandoning their support for 'counter-revolutionary' aristocrats, landowners and priests (Soboul 1964; Rude 1959; Cobb 1987). An authentic, quasi-autonomous 'popular movement' was revealed to have been a key 'actor' in the French Revolution. This, at certain moments, helped to defend or push forward the 'bourgeois revolution', yet it had its own ethos, vision and goals which went beyond those of the most radical of the bourgeois political groupings, the Jacobins. For several months in 1793–4 the latter were obliged, because of pressure from the *sans-culotte* sections in the popular *quartiers* of Paris, to adopt more vigorous interventionist policies of economic control, to tolerate vigorous 'dechristianization', to use 'terror' against counter-revolutionaries. Only through such concessions could they hope to generate sufficient popular support to save the Revolution from the simultaneous assaults of foreign armies and provincial counter-revolutionaries in the west and the Midi. Participants in the revolutionary *journées* were no longer dismissed as ignorant *canaille*, as the bloodthirsty mob which haunted the nightmares of nineteenth-century conservatives like Taine – or of Taine's modish neo-conservative heirs such as Simon Scharma. Instead the 'crowd', and the activisit minority in the popular clubs, were given a more precise social definition. On detailed inspection they turned out to be overwhelmingly 'artisans' – shoemakers, tailors, weavers, carpenters, cabinet-makers, printers.

There was, of course, a danger that the new Marxist historiography would make these activists implausibly respectable, that in an understandable over-reaction against long years of reactionary denigration of 'the rabble' they would construct

an ideal-type popular militant who was, as *sans-culotte* discourse claimed, settled in his *quartier*, honest, industrious, literate, politically aware, public-spirited, egalitarian, down-to-earth, and kind to animals. Nevertheless, analysis of the sociology of the crowds involved in revolutionary uprisings and of the personnel of political clubs and sections did tend to confirm, unsurprisingly, that in an economy in which large-scale capitalist factories were still a rarity, the role of workers employed in these was minimal. Furthermore, the involvement of the much larger 'floating' population of unskilled day-labourers, casual workers and 'criminals' was minimal – except in some of the less political food riots. Kaplan has estimated this section of Paris at approximately 100,000 in 1789 – around one-in-six of the city's population (Kaplan 1979). Popular Paris was a fluid and complex world. Areas such as the faubourg St Marcel, Poisonnière or the Hôtel-de-Ville were characterized by the heavy concentration of day-labourers (*alloués*) casual workers (*hommes de peine*), turbulent porters and river-dockers, migrant Limousin building workers, street-sellers such as Auvergnat water-carriers. By the 1830s such groups were being stereotyped as the 'criminal and dangerous classes'. But alarm at their capacity for violence was already being voiced by the authorities in the late eighteenth century. One fascinating area for future research might be into the precise attitudes of the organized 'popular movement' towards such groups. Andrews has, indeed, hinted that in the Year II the *sans-culotte* section authorities, dominated by master-craftsmen, were involved in vigorous policing of this underclass (Andrews 1971).

Historians of the 'popular movement' have argued that it was important both for its crucial role in pushing forward and consolidating the Revolution and for what it symbolized – a genuine and unprecedented upsurge in the political consciousness and organization of urban workers. It was, thus, portrayed as the direct precursor of the proto-socialist artisanal groups involved in the revolutionary upheavals of 1830, 1848, and 1871. Soboul was, of course, at pains to insist that the figure of the *sans-culotte* should not be confused with the class-conscious 'proletarian' of subsequent Marxist mythology. The immaturity of French capitalism, the persistence of merchant capitalism and of small-scale artisanal production, the residual yearning of many craftsmen for a return to neo-corporatist economic regulation which would protect them against the dangers of the 'free market', and the absence – until 1830 – of any precise language of 'class', all combined to preclude this. Yet the image of the *sans-culotte* was significant because it brought together a political stance with a social condition. *Sans-culotte* rhetoric combined demands for a radical Republic – based on 'direct democracy', on day-by-day controls by the people of their elected deputies – with yearnings for a quasi-egalitarian society of 'small men'. It evoked a world of small retailers, craftsmen and peasants in which each man had the right to own a small shop, workshop or farm – but in which no one should own large enterprises or landed estates. The 'good' *sans-culotte* was an active citizen who lived on the fifth floor, wore simple clothes, did useful productive work, had no servants, spoke his mind in direct language. The popular movement's demands, included the use of 'terror' against 'aristocrats', food-hoarders and speculators, a tax on the rich, requisitioning of food from big landowners and grain-merchants and for government orders to be given to small workshops.

The Jacobin government was dominated by middle-class politicians wary of such views. Concessions to demands for economic controls were made reluctantly in a tactical effort to ensure popular support against counter-revolution. The war effort increasingly necessitated centralized direction, which fitted uneasily with *sans-culotte* calls for local accountability and direct democracy. Moreover the 'Maximum' was imposed not merely to control food prices but, increasingly, to limit inflation by controlling journeymen's wages – where necessary by breaking their strikes. Efforts of the *armées révolutionnaires* to spread revolutionary consciousness into the countryside were viewed with growing alarm by Jacobins as likely to produce a counter-revolutionary backlash. One important reason for the failure of the Parisian popular *quartiers* to come to the defence of Robespierre on the eve of his downfall was that the Jacobins had already dismantled much of the organized popular movement by disbanding the *armées révoltionnaires*, limiting the meetings of the Sections, halting 'dechristianization' campaigns and executing those ultra-left politicians – *enragés* and *Hébertists* – who, from conviction or personal ambition, had continued to encourage popular militancy.

Yet in retrospect popular militants came to lament their failure to defend the Jacobins from their Thermidorian opponents. As price controls were dismantled in 1794–5 there were despairing and futile food riots (Tonnesson 1959). Confronted with the opulent displays of conspicuous consumption of the *nouveaux riches* in the late 1790s, workers came to remember austere Jacobin leaders as more radical than they perhaps had ever really been. The mythology of Jacobinism as a movement dedicated to the creation of an egalitarian democracy and a welfare state – and of Robespierre as the working-man's incorruptible friend – was, thus, to survive into the nineteenth century and to contribute to the emergence of social-democratic politics in the 1840s. Moreover, in 1796 Babeuf put together a coalition of maverick *déraciné* radical intellectuals and former *sans-culotte* activists for his 'conspiracy of equals' which planned to seize power in a coup in order to establish an egalitarian communist regime. Via the writings of his disciple Buonarroti, Babeuf's legacy was passed on to Blanqui and the vanguard secrect revolutionary societies of the July Monarchy.

After the mid 1790s, as Richard Cobb has shown, the 'popular movement' appeared to vanish almost without trace (Cobb 1972). Former militants were systematically hounded by the police. Many were jailed, released and re-arrested countless times. Their small workshops were ruined, their ability to sustain contacts with a wider audience destroyed. Yet the memory of the heroic years of 1789–94 could not be obliterated entirely either by the triumphant bourgeois elites or by Bonapartist or royalist regimes. In popular *quartiers* of Paris, Lyon and other towns the mythology of Year II was sustained in cafés and workshops. Some former militants took refuge in the French armies, whose role they could rationalize as one of spreading revolution to feudal Italy and Germany. Police repression and the anti-worker bias of the Napoleonic legal codes nurtured a latent popular conviction that the Revolution's egalitarian promises had been betrayed by bourgeois elites who had simply destroyed the corporate regulations of the ancien regime in order to leave workers defenceless in the new world of free markets.

Here was the basis for a broad, radical-populist political heritage upon which

the embryonic labour movement of the 1830s could subsequently build. This is not to claim that the popular movement of the early 1790s was, per se, a 'class' movement. It was, as Soboul always admitted, an heterogeneous and precarious coalition of radical bourgeois, teachers, *déraciné* intellectuals and journalists, small retailers, master-craftsmen, journeymen and labourers. Its goals had been a France of free, equal citizens. Its concerns with 'emancipation' were conceived, by its more generous proponents, as relevant even to women or to black slaves in St Domingo. It would, therefore, be an absurd distortion to define it as a 'worker' movement narrowly obsessed with the world of work in craft industry. It had been defeated and driven underground. Yet, however briefly, it had questioned the right of propertied elites to rule. It had eroded habits of deference. It had suggested the possibility that ordinary working people might be able to organize and act in order to seize control of their own destinies.

Doubtless it was a 'minority' movement. The latter-day Richard Cobb, in his obsession to disown the earlier associations with Marxists like Soboul and Rudé, has come to take delight both in evoking individuals from the lower classes who perceived the upheavals of the 1790s as a nightmare, – or who did not know that a 'Revolution' was taking place – and in portraying *sans-culotte* militants, such as masters-craftsmen who beat their apprentices or seduced their female assistants, as self-righteous hypocrites. Annalistes such as Furet have portrayed the Year II as a brief period in which the moderate, sensible Revolution went 'off the rails', hijacked by primitives whose strange symbols and rituals are of greater interest to the social anthropologist than to the political historian. Clearly the militant dechristianization campaign was offensive to those in the popular classes, urban as well as rural, who retained sympathy for Catholic beliefs and rituals. Undoubtedly, artisans in southern cities like Nîmes were amongst the most fervent supporters of counter-revolution. Many of the urban poor experienced the post–1789 years as pure disaster as war and internal conflict disrupted the economy and increased unemployment. Jacobin plans for state welfare provision were never implemented, so that the Revolution had the net effect of undermining much of the old network of elite and church charity without offering any effective system of poor relief to put in its place (Forrest 1981).

The recent historiography of the early French 'labour movement' has focused on the figure of the 'radical artisan'. The relatively gradual pace of industrialization, allied to the decision of French entrepreneurs to concentrate on quality goods in order to preserve their foothold in sectors of international markets not dominated by cheaper British products, served to prolong the existence of a sizeable stratum of craft labour. Yet pressure to reduce production costs prompted merchant-capitalists to adopt a variety of strategies aimed at reducing the independence of craft labour. Artisan producers became increasingly dependent on merchants who placed orders, supplied raw materials and marketed finished products. Tasks were subdivided so that simpler jobs could be put out to less qualified workers. Apprenticeship and the passing-on of knowhow from craftsmen to younger workers were threatened. These and other threats to artisanal skills, work routines and customary payment systems provide one explanation for the emergence of resis-

tance movements of skills workers which involved strikes, the establishment of mutual aid societies and cooperatives and efforts to establish a 'social Republic'.

However such concentration on work-related problems of early nineteenth-century artisans inevitably raises questions about the realities of the workshop culture of the late ancient régime years and of the revolutionary decade. The classic historiography inspired by Soboul dealt almost exclusively with artisanal politics in a brief period of revolutionary upheaval. It made assumptions about the world of work without enquiring in any systematic way if these were valid. Moreover, as M. Sonenscher has observed, by a circular process or argument the political rhetoric of the *sans-culotte* movement has been taken to testify to the solidarities of the artisanal workshops in which masters and journeymen were suppowsed to share common interests and a common outlook (Sonenscher 1984). Only recently have social historians come to investigate how closely the political movement's language reflected the true nature of the workshop. A brief summary of some of the findings of the latest studies of eighteenth-century artisanal mentalities is necessary in order to assess the contribution of artisanal culture to the popular radicalism of the 1790s – and the legacy which it bequeathed to the embryonic labour movement of the 1830s.

Inevitably, detailed research has revealed complexities which throw doubt on the more simple assumptions of older orthodoxies. It is no longer possible to portray a world of small-scale industry in which skilled masters and journeymen, all members of a settled corporate community, worked harmoniously side-by-side, passing skills on to apprentices. The spread of 'proto-industry' in the textile sector was a sign that merchant capitalists were already utilizing the cheaper labour of peasant weavers and spinners – in Normandy, the north, the west, the Midi – in order to outflank a crumbling urban guild system. the Lyonnais silk industry witnessed the growth of merchant-capitalist control of marketing. Marriage contracts in Lyon show that the smallest merchants were already twice as wealthy as the masters (Sarden 1970a, 1970b). In Paris the faubourg St Antoine – soon to be the focus of popular radicalism – owed its rapid economic expansion to the weakness of guild controls there. In many trades illicit *chambrelains* – out-workers outside corporate guild control – were multiplying. Too often the older historiography, obsessed by the small *atelier*, failed to note the growth of larger units of production. In Lyon dyeing and hat-making were done in sizeable enterprises, as were rope and textile production in Nantes. In Paris half of all journeymen locksmiths worked for employers who had more than ten workers, 29 per cent for those with more than 15. The division of labour was not a nineteenth-century innovation but was already commonplace in tailoring, where workers were being forced to specialize in measuring, cutting and stitching or embroidery. *Confection*, the use of sweated labour to produce ready-made goods, was already appearing in the clothing sector. Often journeymen found themselves supervised by foremen, rather than by masters – who now spent their day taking clients' orders, dealing with suppliers and arranging subcontracting. Many apprentices never completed their training. Many journeymen fell into the ranks of the urban poor. The world of work was incresingly fluid and unstable. Only through selective nostalgia could

it be characterized as a settled world of harmony, independence, skill and craft pride.

Soboul hinted that the apparent dominance of the master craftsman in *sans-culotte* politics stemmed from the fact that they were trusted by their journeymen, who lived and worked on intimate terms with them and who shared the same culture. However, Sonenscher claims, this 'intimacy' was often more rhetorical fiction than reality. The myth of the workshop in which journeymen worked alongside masters, lodged and ate with them, will not always bear close scrutiny. Relations were often less than intimate, not least because of the rapid turnover in the labour force. The average length of employment amongst the journeymen tailors in Rouen in 1778–80 was five weeks (Sonenscher 1986a).

Nor were relations necessarily harmonious. Darnton has given an evocative account of the feud, in the 1760s, between journeymen and a master which culminated in the former killing the favourite cats belonging to the master's wife and hanging them on the washing line! (Darnton 1984). Ménétra, the glass-worker whose autobiography provides rare insights into the world of work of the late ancien regime, portrays some provincial masters as relatively affable, still willing to buy rounds of drinks for their journeymen. But Parisian masters were, he claimed, more demanding and conflicts there endemic. He changed jobs frequently and was, for a time, exiled to Versailles by the police for urging fellow journeymen to quit bad masters without giving the required 14-day notice (Roche 1982). In the hatting sector the felters, who shaped the hats, used their *confraternities* as embyronic unions to mount trade disputes both against productivity increases above 'customary' output levels and against the use of noxious chemicals which increased once Canadian beaver pelts were replaced by inferior raw materials (Sonenscher 1987c). C. Truant has argued that the increasing prevalence of such conflicts was symptomatic of a growing crisis within the world of the trades (Traunt 1986).

Of course masters' complaints about insubordinate journeymen were by no means new. In part, journeymen's insults against masters were a ritualized gesture of independence. But, as Garden's study of Lyon suggests, declining opportunities for journeymen to become masters may have exacerbated their frustration (Garden 1970a). With masters themselves squeezed by economic changes journeymen faced the danger of the erosion of customary hours, wages and work practices. During the last years of the ancien régime journeymen hatters, printers, bakers, carpenters, locksmiths, cabinet-makers and gold-workers appeared to be engaged in endless trade disputes. These were, in effect, strikes, though they were variously dubbed *poufs*, *cloques*, *révoltes*, or *coalitions*.

Journeymen frequently resorted to law in their disputes. This, Sonenscher claims, suggest that they did not suddenly emerge into the public and political world in 1789 (Sonenscher 1987a). They were never divorced from the wider public discourse of the eighteenth century. This throws doubt on the thesis of Kaplow's otherwise interesting study of the Parisian lower classes, in which it is argued that they inhabited an apolitical 'culture of poverty' which was only breached by the political ferment of 1788–9 (Kaplow 1972). They had no need to live through the momentous revolutionary events, to listen to Robespierre, or to read cheap pamphlets summarizing Rousseau's thoughts in order to discover the

language of slavery, freedom and of natural rights. Most future *sans-culotte* activists had been involved in legal disputes arising from trade conflicts in the years before 1789 (Sonenscher 1987c).

Clearly, the corporate world of the trades was a world of frequent battles rather than one of harmony or settled hierarchy. Journeymen's *confraternities* and *compagnonnages* organized trade disputes. Their rituals and ceremonial went well beyond the solidarities of the craft. In 20 of 27 trades studied by C. Truant there is evidence of some *compagnonnage* organization. Itinerant journeymen who tramped across France relied on these to provide them, in each town, with a *mère* who secured lodgings and a *rôleur* who arranged their job placement – despite the harassment of the latter by the police and some masters. Most *compagnons* were young and unmarried. They had a cult of virility and strength – which all too often led to brawls between members of the three rivals *devoirs*. Sometimes these were fights over jobs, more often over insults to 'honour'. The *compagnonnage* offered a vehicle for sociability, rituals of drinking, festivals, processions. Its culture tended to encourage spending rather than thrift. But the esoteric quasi-masonic rituals of nicknames, passwords and signs were useful in confusing the police. And the geographical mobility of tramping *compagnons* enabled them to spread knowledge of effective strike tactics and to warn fellow journeymen of 'bad' masters. These latter would be blacklisted, and journeymen who undercut established wage rates would be threatened with violence (Truant 1986).

As Ménétra insists, journeymen *compagnons* did frequently express a pride in their skill and in doing a 'proper' job. But when masters described work in the language of morality and duty, journeymen were sometimes provoked into mocking such pious platitudes and claiming that in reality work was a burden to be endured (Roche 1982).

Journeymen expected to be treated with respect by masters and were quite willing to denounce those 'dishonest' masters who failed to live up to this expectation. Ménétra defined the 'good' master who ran a *bonne boutique* as someone who was skilled, worked alongside his journeymen and who created 'intimacy' by buying drinks and inviting his workers to eat at his table. Such provision of food became a potential issue of disputes as prices rose before the Revolution. Sadly, Ménétra lamented, the 'good' master was rarely found amongst the 'new mode of masters of today'.

Predicatably, the most respectful public use of corporate discourse came from the masters, who argued that the guilds should remain hierarchical and maintain powers to police the trades and to control journeymen. It was the masters who were most vociferous in defence of the guilds in the 1770s when these came under assault from advocates of economic liberalism – philosophers, merchant-capitalists and modernizing bureaucrats such as Turgot – who viewed them as obstacles to economic efficiency because they limited output, obstructed new work processes and insisted on excessive apprenticeship training. Of course, there were maverick masters, lured by visions of greater profits in a deregulated market, who acquiesced to the demise of the guilds. When Turgot introduced his short-lived measures to abolish guilds controls in 1776, journeymen initially responded with glee and with a spectacular outburst of 'insubordination' (Kaplan 1986). Whereas Turgot's new

'liberty' was designed to produce market-based inequalities, journeymen misinterpreted it as a step towards greater equality within the trades. One journeyman joiner was arrested for urging his fellows to quit their jobs on the grounds that 'there are no more masters'. The police were alarmed at the 'insolent rapture' of the popular carnival unleashed as news of Turgot's decision circulated. There were cries of 'Long live the King and Liberty'. But this was not, of course, the sort of 'freedom' that the administration had envisaged. Only gradually did it dawn on journeymen that in the brave new world of market freedoms their own attempts to control job placement through their *compagnonnages* would become illegal too and that the demise of policing or industry by the guilds might lead to increased state policing of journeymen's 'illicit' activities.

As Kaplan observes, the response of the majority of guild masters in 1776 revealed a mixture of vested interest, hierarchic prejudice and perceptive prophecy about the long-term implications of the ending of corporatism. They denounced the journeymen's 'spirit of revolt and sedition'. They insisted that the divine order required that there should always be masters and workers. They warned the government that illicit journeymen's organizations would drive up wages. They appealed – with some success – to the traditionalist elements in the Paris Parlement by arguing that the shattering of chains of hierarchy in the world of the trades would lead to wider social disintegration. Yet, more quickly than the journeymen, they showed an awareness of the threat to their very identity as craftsmen implicit in free-market philosophies. In a Hobbesian world of atomized and warring individuals honest craftsmen might go to the wall as their protection from unscrupulous competitors was dismantled. They foresaw the collapse of apprenticeship, the erosion of quality levels of French industry, the threat to the old skills and the ultimate demise of craft culture. Within months Turgot's policy had been reversed, in part because the Paris police expressed alarm at their inability to control the journeymen. But the reprieve for the guilds proved short lived. In 1790 the Allarde law abolished the corporations. Within months, the Le Chapelier law stated that it was illegal for journeymen to form unions.

Understandably, in the period 1789–1 there had been a great deal of confusion within the artisan world. Many journeymen sought to take advantage of the political situation to push forward orthodox demands. Hatters in Lyon and Marseilles elected militants from their recent industrial disputes to draw up their *cahiers* of grievances. Weavers in Troyes and Rouen revived campaigns for legally sanctioned piecerates. Parisian building and furniture workers pressed for shorter hours (Sonenscher 1989). But the unprecedented political situation clearly provided an entirely new context for atrisan activities. In 1790, as Sewell notes, Paris carpentry journeymen had petitioned the Assembly to abolish the guilds but to preserve journeymen's *compagnonnages* (Sewell 1980). There was a period during which there was great uncertainty. No one was sure whether journeymen and masters had the right of assembly, whether local authorities had the powers to intervene to prevent them. One building employer reported, in alarm, that the Revolution was already changing workers attitudes towards industrial disputes. 'The workers, by an absurd parody of the government, regard their work as their property, the building site as a Republic of which they are jointly the citizens, and believe in

consequence that it belongs to them to name their own bosses, their inspectors and arbitrarily to share out work amongst themselves.'

The Le Chapelier law was designed to put an end to such potential industrial anarchy. Journeymen went on strike to protest at the law. Moreover, bourgeois radicals denounced it as a threat to workers' 'natural rights' – in part because they viewed it as a potential threat to their own rights of assembly.

Given the history of endemic conflict between masters and journeymen within the hierarchic world of the crafts, it is easy to agree with Sonenscher that the *sans-culotte* discourse of the early 1790s should be interpreted not as a reflection of real harmony between masters and journeymen within the 'intimate' world of the workshop but as an attempt to manufacture a rhetoric for political purposes which could suggest that such harmony existed (Sonenscher 1984, 1989).

This attempt was possible because common enemies could be targeted – 'aristocrats', priests, grain hoarders, speculators. It is possible of course, that the shock of the demolition of the corporate regulations and the onset of the chill winds of the free market served to push smaller masters and journeymen closer together. But more than this was required to gloss over the cracks in any potential alliance amongst petty producers. The rhetoric of the *sans-culotte* movement did not derive in any simple or direct way from the old corporate idiom.

The new discourse was, Sonenscher argues, the outcome of dialogue between artisans and Republican intellectuals. It had two main sources. The emphasis that only independent producers could have the necessary autonomy to be active citizens comes from a standard Republic heritage which blended together selected bits of Machiavelli, Harrington and Rousseau. This owed little or nothing to the world of labour.

However, the second strand was based on the concept that work was both moral and a duty. This existed in the corporate idiom of masters and journeymen. To have a skilled trade was seen as honourable – in the way that being, for example, a domestic servant was not. Journeymen and masters alike had always taken offence at any accusation that they were producing shoddy work. And, as we have seen, journeymen consistently maintained that they were not lackeys and should be treated with respect. In this way the *sans-culotte* language, with its emphasis on the proud, honest, independent citizen, did echo the mutual evaluation of the 'good' master and 'honourable' journeymen enshrined in idealized workshop discourse. The metaphor of the *sans-culotte* thus, Sonenscher claims, 'embodied a certain Code of Honour which master and journeymen were bound to use in their transactions with one another'. It was 'charged with those qualities which distinguished master and journeymen alike from domestic servants'. Thus it was capable of supplying the language of French Republicanism with an 'existing social vocabulary' and a range of cultural references, meaningful to an aristanal world – references manifestly lacking in the language borrowed from Sparta, Rome or seventeenth-century England. The morality of the Jacobin Republic hence assumed the overtones of an idealized craft morality.

Indeed the rhetoric of the Year II drew heavily on aspects of Parisian popular culture. The name *sans-culotte* itself derived from a perjorative term used in popular street theatres for an impecunious writer (Sonenscher 1989). It was used by the

right to abuse their radical opponents in 1790–1, then adopted in defiance as a term of pride by popular militants. Hébert's influential *Père Duchesne* newspaper succeeded in merging the stylized vocabulary of street theatre with the language of the crafts – thereby giving political language the inflexions of popular speech. 'Père Duchesne' is a character in street theatre. Hébert has him urge the élites to buckle down to 'a good day's work in an honest trade'. Louis XVI is described as exercising 'the craft (*métier*) of kingship'. This transposition of workshop idiom to national politics had an enduring legacy – and not simply because the Communards in 1871 set up a new *Père Duchesne* newspaper, or because Pouget's anarcho-syndicalist journal of the 1890s, *Le Père Peinard*, employed a similar format, with its eponymous shoe-maker character denouncing the idle rich. It left a legacy in radical political culture, throughout the nineteenth century, in which the 'artisan' became *the* symbol of independence, freedom, honesty and productive toil.

Did the corporate idiom of the craftsmen of the late ancien regime survive the Revolution to act as the basis for the embryonic labour movement of the 1830s? Sewell has argued that it did (Sewell 1980). He singles out, in particular, the *compagnonnages*. These quasi-clandestine journeymen's organizations had, he claims, organized strikes in the eighteenth century. Through their *rôleurs* they had sought to control hiring. Despite the Le Chapelier law, they re-surfaced after the 1790s. In time, many of their earlier internal divisions were healed. They became less hierarchic. Hitherto endemic feuding between the three rival *devoirs* declined. At the same time many of their features – their secret initiation rites and passwords, their mutual aid activities, their role as a job agency for tramping artisans – were ideally suited to play a part in the birth of a 'trade-union' movement.

M. Sonenscher has expressed justifiable scepticism at such claims (Sonenscher 1987b). Certainly *compagnonnages* played a part in some ancien regime strikes. The high point of *compagnonnage* activity lasted from the 1760s to around 1830 – that is to say it straddled the revolutionary period. However, he warns, one should not exaggerate the scope of their influence. They were extremely weak in Paris and in northern France. Their membership consisted largely of young, single, itinerant journeymen. They had little or no foothold in the luxury trades. Most *compagnons* were building workers (masons, carpenters), tailors, bakers, locksmiths or workers in most leather trades except shoe-makers. Their actual membership, at a given moment, was relatively small, even if many journeymen had belonged at one time or another. Unlike Sewell or C. Truant, Sonenscher questions whether it is really useful to adopt a 'teleological' view of them as precursors of later trade-unions. Instead one should view them in the specific context of the world of trades of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Only then can the strange rituals and patterns of behaviour, which have puzzled and embarrassed labour historians, be explained. These included initiation rites in which the neophyte was blindfolded and made to swear an oath or secrecy and loyalty, the use of passwords, the carrying of staves and coloured ribbons, the use of nicknames ('Jean le plus gros') and verbal and physical rivalries between the three *devoirs*, each claiming precedence in mythical line of descent from craftsmen who built the Temple of Solomon. There appears to be little evidence of such quaint rituals among journeymen in Germany, Italy or Britain.

It is tempting to interpret fights between *compagnons* as the contemporary equivalent of conflicts between strikers and blacklegs, or unionists and non-unionists. But, Sonenscher claims, such a rationalization cannot really explain the endemic war of all-against-all which occurred both within and between trades, between *compagnons* and non-*compagnons* and between *compagnons* of rival *devoirs*. What was all this about? Sonenscher inists that although *compagnonnages* were quasi-illegal, little attempt was really made to keep their 'secrets' from the public. Recently initiated *compagnons* would tour cafés to proclaim their new status. The masters for whom they worked knew who was a *compagnon* – indeed had often been *compagnons* themselves in their youth. The explanation lies, perhaps, in the characteristics of a world of work in which many of the 'skills' of specific trades were, in fact, quite widespread and very flexible and relatively easily acquired. A 'locksmith' could, at a pinch, turn his hand to any number of related metal trades. The demarcation lines in the leather trade between *mégisseurs*, *tanneurs* and *chamoisiers* were fairly thin. Young journeymen found themselves seeking employment in a world in which 'tramping' was commonplace, in which there was little job stability, and in which labour turnover was high, in which wages were static and in which trades using the same basic materials were practised in dozens of towns.

By the last years of the ancien regime legal provisions which gave some craftsmen a trade monopoly in a given town were collapsing. Corporate rights were being overturned in the courts. The *compagnnonage* was not the product of some timeless corporate order but a response to the disintegration of that order. It was a way of creating symbolic and ritualized distinctions, a 'pecking order'. Like the western gunslinger, the *compagnon* was anxious to establish the prestige and his myth – if necessary by using violence. He carried the coloured ribbons of his *devoir*. Rival *devoirs* sought to establish a monopoly for their members in a given town – sometimes by putting up a 'champion' to vanquish their rival in a competition to make a high quality object. In a world where 'skill' was, in fact, widely shared, one could then brand members of the rival *devoir* as incompetent workers. *Compagnonnages* thus, Sonenscher concludes, transformed similarities into differences in a world where many could do similar things. It allowed the *compagnon* to escape from the anonymity of the labour market, it gave masters a clue whom to employ.

A distinction should be made between *compagnonnages* and *confraternities* – a distinction which Sewell tends to blur. Members of the latter tended to be older, settled, married artisans (Garrioch and Sonenscher 1986). *Confraternities* were sedentary associations, usually linked to specific localities. They were strong in Paris, where *compagnonnages* were very weak. To become a master in the capital one had to settle there. 'Tramping' journeymen tended to be confined to the worst-paid jobs. *Confraternities* were involved in the flood of lawsuits by means of which the trades sought to defend themselves in the 1780s. But funds established to contest court cases could be used as strike funds. Here, at least, one *can* discern some similarities with the practices of artisan 'resistance' groups of the early nineteenth century.

As will have by now become obvious any conclusion derived from this analysis must remain tentative and nuanced. The following points are worth considering:

1 The embryonic 'labour movement' of the 1830s can only be understood if one takes into account both the political and the industrial experiences of artisans in the late eighteenth century.

(a) Despite the defeat of the Jacobin Republic and of the 'popular movement' the memories and myths of 1789–94 were too powerful to be eradicated.
(b) Despite the anti-corporatist legislation of 1790–1 corporate idioms and solidarities survived the Revolution and were available to artisans in their efforts to preserve their work culture in the new world of the free market.

2 However one must treat all supposed continuities with due scepticism. Jacobinism had been essentially a bourgeois movement. The *sans-culotte* movement rested on a heterogeneous and fragile coalition of social groups and its rhetoric was in part designed to cover up very real conflicts within the world of work. Masters and journeymen were often at each others' throats and their responses to the collapse of the guilds was not identical. Similarly *compagnonnages* were as much vehicles for endemic conflicts within the world of young journeymen as expressions of proto-trade-union solidarities.

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Part I

The Emergence of the French Labour Movement, 1815–1848

1

From Restoration to Revolution

BEFORE THE MAKING: FRENCH LABOUR AND THE BOURBON RESTORATION, 1815–1830

The labour history of the Bourbon Restoration remains largely uncharted territory. Understandably, radical historians have been attracted either to the *sans-culotte* militancy of the 1790s or to the upsurge of worker protest in the early 1830s, whilst historians of the Restoration have remained concerned with the conflicts between Catholic ultra-royalism and the liberal bourgeoisie. And, indeed, Bourbon police officials, whose concern it was to keep a close surveillance on workers for evidence of protest, constantly reassured their political masters that despite sporadic labour unrest – and endemic feuding between rival *compagnonnages* – workers' involvement in political issues appeared to be minimal and to pose little danger.

The industrial and labour policies of the regime were not without certain central ambiguities. On the one hand some bureaucrats were tempted to woo popularity and to seek to nurture working-class royalism, in order to spite the bourgeois-liberal opposition, by evincing a certain tolerance for the revival of elements of the corporatism of the Ancien Régime. For example, neo-corporate organizations amongst trades involved with food supply were often tolerated. The butchers' guild in Limoges revived and continued to flourish well into the new century. It continued to monopolize the city's retail trade, dominated one *quartier* of the old town, had its own annual cycle of rituals and festivals. It remained staunchly traditionalist in its culture – and Catholic-royalist in its politics (Merrimann 1985). On the Marseilles docks, which flourished as the port's trade expanded after the stagnation of the wartime decades, the stevedores' *corporation* was permitted to survive and to perpetuate its monopoly over the loading and unloading of ships. Shipowners tolerated the persistence of such quaint restrictive practices because the master-stevedores offered guaranteed protection for cargoes against pilfering. City and departmental authorities argued that this flagrant breach of free-market orthodoxy was a small price to pay for the maintenance of the pro-Bourbon loyalties of the Catholic dock-workers (Sewell 1974).

In addition, departmental and municipal authorities never adopted a wholly non-interventionist approach to industrial relations. Police monitored local working conditions and prefects often showed themselves willing to act as arbitrators in

strikes. As F. Rude's analysis of the Lyon building-workers' dispute of June 1830 indicates, local authorities continued – down to the end of the regime – to interpret the existing laws in a highly flexible way. The Rhône prefect argued that a strict reading of the relevant legislation might well lead to the conclusion that officials should wash their hands of such disputes and leave them to be resolved by the free market. However with one thousand angry building craftsmen demonstrating outside the town hall in support of their claim for a *tarif* – an agreed local 'rate for the job' – he felt that non-intervention was a recipe for dangerous unrest. Hence he urged the mayor to adopt a creative reading of the law of 22 Germinal Year XI which could, he suggested, be interpreted as giving an 'almost paternal authority' to municipal officials to act as industrial arbitrators in such conflicts. Thus the authorities sought to appease the building contractors by arresting a few strike leaders, but also to calm the workers by pressuring the employers to fix some sort of *tarif* (Rude 1969).

The Restoration years also saw the continuation of the campaign, begun already under the Bonapartist régime, to restore the guilds and to reverse the trend towards a free market in labour which the legislation of the early 1790s had accelerated. Denunciation of the unchecked free market could, of course, be voiced by political radicals or by humble journeymen and labourers who saw themselves as the victims – actual or potential – of market forces. But much of the most influential pressure came in these years from more conservative quarters. Such critics argued that to allow the market to rule was to condemn French society to a process of social atomization which could only result in chaos. If the old corporate structures and hierarchies were to be abolished by law, the end result would be an individualism which could only produce the anarchy of each man for himself, an internal war of all against all. Such obsessions with 'disorder' were often linked to a concern that the advent of open entry into crafts could lead to a decline in the standards and quality of French workmanship. S. de Merey argued that in the brave new liberal world 'a cartwright can become a clockmaker . . . Do you find this appropriate? Is there any merit in this disorder?' Emeric-David was fearful for the future of French industry. Under the new system 'good workers become rare, and industry cannot fail to degenerate'. Only by returning to the guild system could one ensure that 'the good cartwright will become a master . . . and the consumer will have good wheels'.

The autobiographical reminiscences of a man who by the 1840s was a crayfisherman in the Seine-et-Oise illustrate, perhaps, why such observers were alarmed. On the eve of the Revolution he had been apprenticed to his father a Parisian cabinet-maker.

> I must say that with admirable dexterity I spoiled all the exotic wood that he gave me to work. This dear father groaned to see that his only son would never be able to get a guild mastership and to take over from him in his workshop. Fortunately the Revolution of '89 broke out and freedom of commerce was proclaimed which allowed me to take over my father's establishment with no formality whatsoever. But that same fortune was soon the cause of my ruin, for on all sides sprang up cabinetmakers as ignorant as myself and with whom I could not compete . . . I therefore left my father's shop and became a clockmaker. As you can imagine I was even less of a

> clockmaker than I was a cabinetmaker; but with the help of a skilled worker I managed to fool the public for some time. Unfortunately a mason who set himself up as a clockmaker . . . did me considerable harm, for he was even craftier than my employee. As for me . . . I left the clock trade with few regrets and opened up a wineshop. I would have had to abandon my new establishment had not an intelligent assistant come to my aid and taught me the useful art of making wine out of water and chemicals. (Sibalis 1988)

Advocates of a return to the old corporate order included also those – amongst them some ex-guildmasters – who insisted that this was the only way to restore social control over the journeymen, to 'police the lower orders' as one master-builder had delicately phrased it in 1806. As Kaplan has shown, the 'policing of the world of work' had been one of the major justifications for the continuation of the guild system put forward by masters and worried conservatives alike in the 1770s in the face of Turgot's threat to introduce a free labour market. Under the Restoration some masters looked to this as a solution to the perennial problem of 'insubordinate' journeymen, others as a way of seeking to prevent the poaching of experienced journeymen by 'shoddy' competitors (Kaplan 1979).

However, the net results of this campaign were minimal both before 1815 and after. Certainly there is evidence that the Paris Prefecture of Police looked with favour on such schemes as a useful tool for exerting control over the capital's labour force, and both Bonapartist and Bourbon police chiefs did permit semi-tolerated *chambres syndicales* in a number of trades. But these remained voluntary, and their powers to regulate the labour market met with decisive opposition from the Ministry of Commerce and from big capitalist interests represented on the Paris Chamber of Commerce (Sibalis 1988). In the last resort the Bourbon régime, for all its gestures of nostalgic regret for the passing of the corporate order, remained wedded to the new laissez-faire principles. In general, workers' attempts to impose a *tarif* met with little official support. Complaints from paternalistic local notables – clergy, landowners, doctors – about the long hours and bad working conditions of child labour in the new textile mills were usually met by a standard official message that the administration was powerless to intervene in such issues, which were the result of freely negotiated agreements between industrialists and parents. In 1827 a small wool manufacturer from Romantin (Loir-et-Cher) sent a classic complaint to the Interior Ministry. Laissez-faire policies were, he claimed, permitting a small group of rich men to become simultaneously merchants and manufacturers, spinners and dyers. They were, thereby, reducing former master-wool-workers to the status of mere '*ouvriers*' working for men who, ten years ago, they 'barely regarded as their equals'. Thus a 'numerous population, jealous of its independence', was being reduced 'to the dire necessity of bowing humbly beneath the yoke of such a monopoly'. In principle, it sounded fine for a man to be free to choose his own occupation. But the 'free market' led, inexorably, to monopoly. 'To proclaim . . . unlimited liberties of industry, to authorize ambitious men to put *no* limit on their insatiable greed, that is to tolerate licence, subversive to all the interests of society, to give a boost to all sorts of disorder.' The intermediate classes – the sturdy, industrious backbone of France since Colbert – were being

crushed. Romantin had had 250 workshops, it now had 12. Soon it would have two large mills. 'Unlimited liberty is . . . in effect, the law of the strongest.'

The Minister's response was succinct and uncompromising. Such views were corporatist. Competition promoted efficiency. Liberal economic laws had produced beneficial effects too remarkable for anyone to consider meddling with them (Bourgin and Bourgin 1941).

In the sphere of industrial relations the odds were stacked heavily against workers. The Bourbons inherited an armoury of repressive legislation from their Revolutionary and Bonapartist predecessors – the 1791 Le Chapelier Law; the law of Germinal Year XI; articles 291–4 and 414–16 of the *Code Pénal* articles 1790–1 of the *Code Civil*. Worker's' coalitions were illegal and their organizers faced arrest. The workers' passbook – the *livret* – was systematically imposed on all trades. Police informers were alert for the slightest hint of industrial or political protest. The Conseils des Prud'hommes, industrial tribunals which adjudicated in disputes between merchants, masters and workers, were weighted in their composition towards the former (Cotterean 1987). Organizations such as the Conseil Général du Commerce and the Conseil Généal des Fabriques et Manufactures, composed of key industrialists such as Koechlin and de Wendel, exerted constant pressure on Ministers in favour of industrial 'freedom'. At a session of the latter in 1828 it was asserted that 'it is no longer a question of whether or not the multiplication of machines should or should not be tolerated: they have become in all of Europe a necessity to which one must submit under pain of becoming a tributary of one's neighbours'.

The nuances and ambivalences of official attitudes towards 'traditional' worker organizations are well illustrated in the treatment of *compagnonnages*. On 20 February 1829 the Interior Minister insisted that 'the Administration has never authorized these societies' and quoted articles 415 and 416 of the *Code Pénal* which explicitly banned 'all workers' coalitions'. Yet the Indian summer of the *compagnonnages* in the 1820s was permitted by the de facto semi-tolerance accorded to them by Bourbon officials, who seem to have felt that such an 'archaic' organization must pose no real political threat, In 1821, when the mayor of Nantes had banned *compagnons* from carrying their canes and wearing their distinctive coloured ribbons, the Interior Minister reprimanded him – insisting that the *compagnonnages*' traditions were a 'powerful incentive to young workers who desire to perfect themselves' (Bourgin and Bourgin 1912). Young journeymen in the building, cutlery, hatting, coopery and leather trades were the most likely to be members. However the incessant brawls (*rixes*) between rival *devoirs* strained the authorities' patience. In 1826 the Interior Ministry insisted that while the Mayor of Nantes – again – had no right to escort four *forgeron compagnons* out of his city, some tighter controls were needed. *Rixes* could explode in a variety of contexts. Sometimes *compagnons* fought members of 'marginal' trades, such as shoe-makers or bakers whose right to set up *compagnonnages* they disputed. Sometimes, as in the Paris carpentry trade in 1821, *compagnons* clashed with unorganized workers accused of poaching their jobs (*renards*). Sometimes members of rival *devoirs* in the same trade fought when one group accused another of undercutting established rates in order to steal jobs in specific *quartiers* where they claimed a monopoly. In August 1828 *compagnon*

bakers fought with tailors – only for all to combine against the police when they tried to intervene. Serious injuries, even fatalities, were commonplace. A shoemaker *compagnon* died in Beaucaire in July 1822 – victim of the 'implacable hatreds of the Midi'.

While such violence posed a threat to public order, it had the advantage that it made popular unity against the elites much less likely. However, the authorities were alert to the danger that the *compagnonnages*' quasi-masonic character made outside penetration difficult. Witnesses were rarely willing to testify, for 'the unity which reigns amongst them deprives the court of their testimony'. By the early 1820s the prefect of the Gironde voiced official worries about the possible implications of the *compagnonnage* revival. 'United in *corporations* to which they cling with sentiments of absurd fanaticism, they could become terrible instruments in the hands of factions. Their audacity increases daily . . . because their numbers are growing rapidly as they are no longer culled by conscription.' These fears were fuelled by a congress at Bordeaux at which 150 delegates debated the possibility of uniting the *devoirs* and eliminating *rixes*

The prefect feared that their pretensions to control hiring and apprenticeship training and their ability to black – 'place on the index' – employers who resisted their demands were 'harmful to industry'. He urged the need to replace the *compagnons mères* – who ran the lodging houses for itinerants and found them jobs – with some sort of official employment agency. The potential danger posed by the *compagnonnages* appeared to be realized when, for example, the rival *Père Soubise* and *Solomon devoirs* of the carpenters sought to end their internecine feuding and agree that in Paris the former should monopolize work on the right bank, the latter on the left bank. Equally worrying was the attempt of Toulon bakery *compagnons* during a prolonged industrial dispute (1826–8) to recruit amongst the unorganized. By the late 1820s only the building trade *compagnonnages* still had rival *devoirs*. Even so the taste of *compagnons* for violence continued with little abatement (Bourgin and Bourgin 1912).

In theory, mutual aid societies had little in common with the *compagnonnages*. They were certainly less hierarchical, less ritualistic. They were in origin voluntary benefit societies which collected funds to help workers in periods of illness or injury or to provide a decent funeral and to look after widows. They sometimes had their origins in religious *confrèries* and some still took on the name of a patron saint as an indication of devotional principles. However, outside parts of the Midi, most were secularized by the 1820s. From the Bonapartist period onwards they were obliged to submit their statutes to the authorities. A regulation of 1806 insisted that a mutual aid society ought to include members from a variety of trades – an attempt to ensure that they did not function as embryonic trade-unions and use funds for strikes. Yet one survey of the 160 Parisian societies in 1823 found that 132 were, in fact, based on single trades. Undoubtedly, they became widely popular in the 1820s. The number in Paris alone quadrupled to 184 between 1819 and 1828 – when they had some 18,000 members in the capital. Their membership included many workers from 'sedentary' trades with little *compagnonnage* tradition, such as printers (Sibalis 1989).

Nevertheless, demarcation lines between these two types of organization were

often blurred. Both could act as 'fronts' for strike organization. Lyon hatters organized mutual aid societies when police surveillance of their *compagnonnage* became too intrusive (Vial 1941). Conversely when the Marseilles bakers had their mutual aid society dissolved by the authorities in 1823 they organized a *compagnonnage* which ran their 1826 strike. Even in the 1790s there is evidence of mutual aid groups being active in strikes, and employers were always suspicious that this might occur. However, Sibalis is probably correct to argue that their involvement in strikes was relatively rare. When J. Bédé, the secretary of a cabinet-makers' mutual aid society in Paris, helped organize a strike in 1820 he kept the strike committee completely distinct (Gossez 1984). The real contribution of such societies to the development of the labour movement was more to do with the values they represented. They stood for solidarity, dignity – and sobriety. Members were dismissed for appearing drunk at meetings or for brawling. In this they represented a break with the values of the late ancien regime glass-worker J.-L. Menétra who scorned putting money on one side for a rainy day and made a virtue of rowdy drunkenness (Roche 1982). Mutual aid society organizers emphasized the dignity of their trade, resented the authorities' attempts to insist that a society should have a *notable* as its patron. As one insisted: 'We have the right to be proud of belonging to an organization which proves, by its moral and material progress, how wrong those philanthropists are who wish to see in the workers a class of juveniles to whom they would be tutors.'

When workers were suspected of using their semi-tolerated organizations as a cover for industrial disputes, police repression was systematic. During the Paris carpenters' strike of 1822 the arrest of 17 activists for threatening 'peaceful workers' (i.e. non-strikers) provoked a demonstration of five hundred outside the local police station. Police then made a further 142 arrests of men accused of using mutual aid funds to finance the strike and tightened up control on *livrets*, since many carpenters were known to their employers only by their *compagnonnage* pseudonyms. After the 1826 Marseilles bakers' strike 33 workers were jailed for 'misusing' *compagnonnage* funds. The authorities were worried of 'seditious contagion' as the strike spread to other Midi towns. However, the strike itself was weakened by feuds between mature *compagnons* and younger *aspirants* who felt aggrieved at being excluded from planning decisions.

As such examples suggest, most of the strikes in these years involved craft-workers in small-scale 'artisanal' industry. Amongst the better organized of these trades one frequent goal of strike activity was the defence of the *tarif*. This had been a commonplace of the ancien regime but was now, according to one minister, 'in accord neither with the principles of political economy nor with those of our legislation'. In 1817 Lyon hatters succeeded in getting a *tarif* restored after a three-week strike. Although the mayor of Lyon expressed some sympathy for employers' complaints at the hatters' strike tactics, he urged them to make concessions on the wage issue and to tolerate, for the moment, the existence of a mutual aid society. It was better, he suggested, to 'regularize and neutralize' it than to seek its destruction. In 1819, after a fresh strike to enforce the *tarif*, the mayor's conciliatory approach was disavowed by the resolutely free-market Minister of the Interior. Five hatters were jailed and their society dissolved. Yet throughout

the 1820s Lyon hatters frequently collected funds for striking colleagues and they resisted efforts of employers to undercut wage rates by introducing unorganized workers. Equally they kept tight control on work pace, insisting that no worker produce more than a certain number of hats per day (Vial 1941).

A fascinating insight into attempts of craft workers to maintain customary work and pay systems is provided in a rare worker autobiography (Gossez 1984; Sonenscher 1986). J. E. Bédé's text centres around a strike in 1820–1 in the faubourg St Antoine furniture sector, where the author had worked since migrating to Paris in 1812. He had been born in the Loire valley in 1775 and spent his early life there as a journeyman joiner. In Paris he had found a world of work in which the Revolutionary economic deregulation was beginning to have a discernible impact – although, as Sonenscher warns, N. Raubo's 1772 *Art du Menuisier* is full of complaints about the way in which unregulated furniture-makers were, even then, moving into the faubourg St Antoine. Bédé's narrative is valuable for giving a sense of how journeymen reacted to the new economic climate. The crucial issue of conflict was innovation in the wage system. Until 1812 journeymen were paid by the day. Hence they made no protest when requested to unload and carry timber – not least because it was the trade custom for an employer to express thanks for this assistance by offering a meal at his table. By 1820, however, workers were paid so much per chair. They came, therefore, to resent the work as unpaid and, thus, as making it more difficult for journeymen to accumulate capital needed to set up as masters.

The strike began when journeymen returned from a fête to find that piles of timber had accumulated. They met in cafés to plan their protest. Bédé was drawn in as a spokesman because he was the secretary of the mutual aid society, even though this organization played no direct rôle in the dispute. This lasted into 1821, with some journeymen migrating to seek jobs in the provinces and others going back to work for those employers who made concessions. Bédé insists that the strike was apolitical – but the arrest of himself and other strike activists was scarcely likely to make them more favourable to the political system. The language used to justify the strikes was couched in the old rhetoric of the moral economy. The unilateral employer innovations, in particular the ending of the meal, were seen as immoral. Much of the appeal was to tradition, to a past which was almost certainly quasi-mythical – for many of the 'abuses' which workers resented were creeping in during the eighteenth century. But alongside this style of self-justification there was evidence, too, of the impact of the political discourse of 1789. The new tasks which employers were seeking to impose were denounced as *corvées*, an obvious echo of the Revolution's anti-feudal rhetoric.

Once again it is not easy to sum up the above data in any simple formula. This was clearly a transitional period. The old corporate world had largely gone. Yet the Bourbon authorities still flirted with corporate regulation and tolerated some traditional worker practices – whether through nostalgia for the ancien regime, because of pragmatic concern to avoid unrest or in order to cock a snook at their liberal opponents' free-market principles. Workers, too, were torn between old and new worlds. As yet they lacked any coherent vocabulary of 'class', whilst the political radicalism aroused in 1789–94 had largely gone underground. Inter-

compagnonnage feuds appeared impervious to attempts to curb them in the interests of wider worker solidarities. Possibly the growth of mutual aid societies hinted at future developments. But, as yet, the explicit goals of industrial disputes remained 'traditional', as craft workers sought to maintain *tarifs* or to defend work practices.

WORKERS AND MACHINES

With workers' organizations enjoying only a degree of semi-tolerance and workers' 'politics' apparently quiescent, machine breaking – although never widespread – assumed a disproportionate place in labour protest. F. Manuel argued that this represented a 'pathetic expression of fury' by an immature working class which would decline after 1830 as more sophisticated analysis taught workers that capitalism per se, not the machine, was their enemy (Mannel 1938). Recent historiography, influenced by E. P. Thompson's sympathetic reconstruction of the strategies of English Luddites, has presented their French counterparts in rather less 'archaic' terms (Perrot 1978; Gaillot 1977).

There were Luddite outbursts in the 1780s. As Parisian artisans were storming the Bastille, Rouen cotton workers were demolishing spinning machines, which they viewed as a threat to cottage outwork. The *cahiers de doléance* of Troyes protested that by doing the work of many hand-workers, machines would reduce entire communities to destitution. In the 1790s Lille carders, Troyes spinners and St Etienne cutlers indulged in sporadic attacks on machinery, but the issue receded as internal and foreign conflicts slowed the development of French industry.

The 'machine question' never, in fact, posed such massive problems in France as in Britain, where factory machine spinning first multiplied the demand for handloom weavers only for mechanization of weaving to condemn entire communities of independent-minded handloomers to wage decline and eventual extinction. In France rural out-work persisted – despite crises in the 1840s and 1860s – down to the Great Depression at the end of the century, because it remained mutually beneficial to outworkers and merchant-capitalists alike. Out-workers clung to their independence, resisted the move to the factory. But their demise was much more gradual and less dramatic than in Britain. During the Restoration Parisian textile manufacturers were in the process of moving production to the countryside from the turbulent, high-wage capital.

Nevertheless, significant changes *had* occurred during the Empire. Conscription had led to localized labour shortage and had increased the incentive for mechanization. In 1816 Châteauroux textile-workers, petitioning against machines, blamed employers' enthusiasm for them on the wars – for 'hands had become scarce'. A police report of November 1816, commenting complacently that 'they do not break machines in France as they do in England', thus spoke too soon. There were to be around a hundred major Luddite outbreaks over the next three decades – with the peak incidence in 1816–19, 1828–33, 1840 and 1846–8. The first two periods correlate with three factors of possible significance – surges of industrial mechanization, harvest failures and rising food prices, and political upheaval. In 1816–17

the Bourbon régime was still struggling to establish itself. By the late 1820s it was facing an increasing challenge from its liberal opponents.

Threats to machines occurred in several industries. In 1817 shoemakers petitioned against mechanization, and a furniture manufacturer in the Faubourg St Antoine bombarded the police with his fantasies that his workers were in league with English Luddites to plot the destruction of his mechanized saws. Protracted resistance from Picardy shawlworkers after 1818 forced merchant-capitalists to withdraw machinery. But it was the woollen textile sector which experienced the most severe troubles. The cotton industry was relatively young and had fewer traditional work patterns to replace. In the 1820s Alsace cotton-masters, faced with workers who sought to sabotage machine production by breaking threads, simply imported Swiss workers to replace them.

Agitation was most extensive in older woollen towns (Sedan, Rheims, Vienne, Carcassonne, Lodève, Clermont) where mechanization was in its infancy in the post–1815 years (Johnson 1979). Here employers introduced new technologies as much to achieve tighter labour control as to secure productivity increases. As Buret later commented, machines 'have delivered capital from the tyranny of labour'. In 1818 C. A. Costar remarked that 'machines, today, will make the ill-will of the workers impotent . . . since they are no longer indispensible instruments . . . and because one can conveniently replace them by workers who are new and inexperienced'. The wool croppers, who cut wool from the hides using large scissors, were the prime target. In Sedan they were a tight-knit group of male workers who passed knowhow on to their sons, set their own work pace, elected 'orators' to negotiate with the merchants and 'blacked' employers who cut wages. Shearing machines had existed since the mid eighteenth century, but Sedan merchants still feared to introduce them during the Empire. In 1803 one merchant told a government investigation that if workers resisted mechanization 'the government would undoubtedly punish them; but who will return to us our murdered families and burned workshops?' But after 1815 employers at last braved their fears and introduced the Douglas shearer to 'put an end to the croppers' seditious spirit'.

The passage of salesmen for the cropping machines through southern wool towns became 'chequered with Luddite riots' – the best-studied that in Vienne (Isère) in 1819 (Mannel 1938). Here carders, spinners and weavers already worked in large mills – but shearing was still done in the workshops of master-croppers. When rumours spread of the arrival of the 'great cropper' the prefect urged the manufacturers to consult him before they introduced it since the shearers had wide support from other wool-workers who feared that displaced shearers would seek work as spinners or weavers – thereby driving down wages in the entire industry. 'It is prudent to spare ourselves the disorders which the Luddites have committed in England.' The government ordered the prefect to preach a laissez-faire sermon to the workers, reminding them that in Sedan employers had introduced machines in order to remain competitive with business rivals in other towns – and other countries – and hence to safeguard local jobs. The sceptical shearers remained unconvinced and responded with a shrewd appeal to the King. 'If we were under Napoleon . . . we should not be presenting any demands, because three-quarters of us would be in the Army, but at present we are under a paternal

King who loves his subjects . . . If he knew that this machine would reduce many of us to begging he would not let it be introduced.' As middle-aged family men they had no real chance of finding alternative employment, they insisted.

The subprefect's attempts to blame unrest on young, single migrant journeymen croppers, 'audacious because they have nothing to lose and are without families', were the reverse of the truth. For it was master-croppers who were inciting their own journeymen to oppose the machines, buying them drinks in cafés. Mass demonstrations were held, a curé who defended private property rights was howled down, songs were composed to denounce the 'great cropper'. Workers from other woollen towns sent messages of solidarity. The machine salesmen urged that troops be sent. When some protestors were jailed, crowds outside the jail chanted 'Long live the King, Down with the Cropper!' When the machine arrived the wagon on which it was being transported was tipped into the shallows of the river. Master-croppers jumped on it to hack at it with their shearing scissors.

The outcome was anti-climatic. The machine, only slightly damaged, was installed. Twenty-nine arrests were made. The courts handed out lenient sentences. Under the influence of a local clergyman, who had pleaded for clemency, the workers sent a letter to the prefect promising to be peaceful in future.

Did this episode illustrate the wool-workers' 'archaic' mentality? The loyalist petition to the crown, the clergyman's mediating role, the apparent return to calm after the outburst do not appear to denote any advanced level of consciousness. Women had played a role in the riot. Some had called the men 'cowards' for not acting more vigorously. One had replied to a soldier who urged her to go back to her place in the home by asserting 'No, this is our place.' However, M. Perrot has suggested that female involvement in Luddite episodes in 1816–19 may be linked to housewives' anxieties at high food prices in these years. Yet were the Vienne workers as 'traditionalist' as they at first sight might appear? Was the appeal to the king a genuine expression of belief in royal paternalism – or a shrewd tactical ploy? By 1840 wool-workers were espousing utopian socialist ideas (Johnson 1971). Were not the events of 1819 a possible watershed in the evolution of workers' consciousness in the town?

Indeed wool-workers involved in similar conflicts in southern wool towns often exhibited signs of quite sophisticated planning. C. Johnson has emphasized the high degree of coordination in the actions of wool-workers in Lodève – a town where factories had been established for some time (Johnson 1979). In Clermont (Hérault), the campaign against machines used threatening wall posters designed to intimidate the employers: 'We do not intend to make attempts against your factories; but if you do not give us work . . . we shall not be able to avoid an attack on you and your machines. You have eight days to reflect.'

The tone of letters to the authorities was very different: 'Gentlemen, Administrators, you who are armed with supreme powers, may your habitual goodness seek to conciliate the manufacturers in order that we not be covered in shame by an action which misery forces us to make.' Six workers were jailed for two months – but a primary teacher accused of penning these two suitably contrasting messages got a two-year sentence.

The Restoration authorities were trapped – as the workers sensed – in their

own insoluble dilemma. Committed on economic grounds to defend laissez-faire orthodoxy, they remained, nevertheless, dubious about the liberal capitalist bourgeoisie and still half open to workers' claims that machines would engender social disintegration. The Hérault prefect called the machines 'an inevitable and almost irreparable evil' whose unfortunate victims could be offered only charity, whilst the 'factious ones' had to be 'repressed with severity'. In Vienne the clergy, traditionalist notables and even the *Procureur du Roi* expressed sympathy for the workers. The Luddites were not criminal dregs or young hooligans but married craftsmen, often small-masters – in a sense were traditional small employers like the Nottingham small hosiery masters active in English Luddism. Significantly, sentences for Luddism became more severe after 1830, when the Bourbons were replaced by hard-nosed 'liberals' who were true believers in the free market.

The dilemma of the Bourbons is incarnated in the figure of Villeneuve-Bargemont. As prefect of Haute-Garonne he suppressed Luddite outbursts in Montauban. As a christian-paternalist he was deeply hostile to the ethos of the new industralists. 'As for myself', he wrote, 'I could draw from the writings of Adam Smith and Say . . . some very good advice, but for the moment it gives neither work nor bread' (Duroselle 1951).

The machine question also attracted the attention of the maverick economist Sismondi who argued, like worker militants of the 1830s, that machines could only benefit workers under a different social order in which profits were more fairly distributed. For the moment he challanged his rivals to show him 'the people whom manufacturer has made happy'. He analysed the late 1820s slump as one of over-production, and questioned whether displaced artisans could easily find work. Future historians, he prophesied, would regard the people of his own age as barbarians for tolerating the misery created by the redundancy of workers with such complacency.

In all, Guillot claims, French Luddism produced only 15 major cases of actual violence in the three decades after 1815. Often, as at St Pons (Hérault) in 1822, there were threats to smash machines if they were not removed. In 1821 at Lodève when a cropper was smashed, there were suspicions that an employer, who had found it a disappointment, secretly incited workers to do this in order to avoid having to pay for it! Manuel argues that there is little evidence that Luddism seriously impeded the mechanization of French industry. However one might argue that southern wool-workers consistently ignored laissez-faire enthusiasts' pleas to them to accept technological change and that this prolonged community resistance amy have prompted the decision of the Midi élites to pull out of textiles and to invest in vineyards. By the 1840s Lodève and other woollen towns with a history of Luddism were exhibiting a precocious sympathy with socialist ideas which was often absent from newer northern mill towns where machines had been accepted with less popular opposition.

WORKERS AND POLITICS, 1815–1827

There is no reason to question the view that the Restoration saw little that could accurately be described as 'working-class politics' and that the period represents a hiatus between the *sans-culotte* radicalism of the 1790s and the more self-conscious and ideologically sophisticated worker movement which surfaced in the aftermath of 1830 (Judt 1986). The socialist-feminist Suzanne Voilquin spoke for the next generation of radicals when she dismissed this 'painful' era as marked by repression and by the absence of any coherent protest against growing extremes of wealth and poverty. Although embryonic socialist concepts were being debated by St Simonian students and, as we have seen, although Sismondi offered a radical critique of free-market economics, there was, as yet, little apparent encounter between these ideas and actual labour unrest. Insofar as workers used language as a weapon in their struggles they tended to use the rhetoric of the past – appealing to 'justice', to the values of the 'moral economy', or urging neo-paternalist bureaucrats to reintroduce corporate controls. Study of police archives leaves an overwhelming impression that the regime saw potential threats as more likely to come from the liberal bourgeoisie or disaffected Bonapartist veterans than from workers. In May 1822 the Paris Prefect of Police claimed that 'workers are more and more losing the habit of occupying themselves with political matters and . . . of reading newspapers' – though he confessed that full employment contributed to this calm.

Positive worker support for Catholic-royalism remained strongest in some Midi towns. In Nîmes and other urban centres with a Protestant presence sectarianism kept the Catholic *petit peuple* loyal to ultra-royalist notables – though they were often an unruly, volatile popular clientele. Marseilles, whose port trade had been badly hit by the wartime blockade, had strong popular royalist sentiments. So too had Toulouse, where the decline in the wealth of the nobles and of clergy after 1789 had had serious consequences for employment and for charity provision. In such towns royalist elites continued to court popularity after 1815 by patronage of penitent confrèries, religious fétes, local patois culture and mutual aid societies (Aminzade 1981; Sewell 1974).

A frequent feature of industrial disputes was the attempt of workers to appeal to the 'paternalism' of the Bourbon authorities against the laissez-faire attitudes of employers. Were such touching declarations of faith in the regime's benevolence expressions of genuine sentiment? Or were they simply a pragmatic attempt to exploit the ambivalence of the regime towards the industrial bourgeoisie? There is no simple answer. Almost certainly there was an element of shrewd, even cynical, calculation when such language was uttered in some of the regions of eastern France noted for their coolness towards the Bourbon aristocratic and clerical elites. On the other hand, the small Catholic peasant-miners who protested at the advent of the big coal 'monopolies' to the Gard – which they, correctly, viewed as a threat to the local mixed economy since the export of coal from the region deprived local silk-worm rearing of cheap fuel – were perfectly genuine when they expressed their case in terms of nostalgia for the Ancien Regime and loyalty to ultra-royalist landowners (Gaillard 1974; Lewis 1992).

During a labour dispute in 1822 at Sedan, a town still troubled by introduction

of new textile machinery, a worker was arrested for shouting that he would happily fight for Napoleon, but not for Louis XVIII. Insofar as there was evidence of worker opposition to the regime during its first decade, this took the form of Bonapartist populism much more frequently than that of neo-Jacobin Republicanism – though, as will become clear, these shared a number of common characteristics.

According to Ménager only two of the 83 incidents of arrests for seditious political cries and similar offences in 1826–9 were explicitly Republican (Ménager 1988). Popular neo-Jacobinism did survive as one underground stream of worker opposition. Luddite protests against new machinery in the Rive-de-Giers pits were viewed as 'all the graver because one read on the placards the words "*patrie*" and "Revolution" '. In 1827 striking artisans in Toulon favoured songs including phrases about 'liberty and equality'. In 1821–2 the authorities had claimed to detect signs of Republican incitement of workers involved in a dispute in the Paris calico industry. But these incidents were few in number. The overall impression is that neo-Jacobinism was, at best, lying dormant in workers' circles and that it was openly advocated by only a few, isolated individuals.

The popular sympathy for Bonapartism may, at first sight, seem rather odd. Many of the most repressive features of a legal and administrative system which discriminated against workers had been systematized by the Napoleonic Codes. The final years of the Empire had witnessed substantial economic dislocation and much popular resistance to conscription. Napoleon's police chief, the ex-Jacobin Fouché, had systematically hounded the surviving militants from the *sans culotte* movement (Cobb 1972). How, then, can one explain the deposed Emperor's urban popular support?

Former *sans culotte* activists could take some satisfaction from the way in which Bonaparte's armies had handed out military humiliations to 'feudal' European monarchies and continued to defy plutocratic-capitalist Britain. The Napoleonic Empire had, if in a distorted way, exported the legislation of the Revolution. Hence the soldiers of Bonaparte's armies still had some sense of being soldiers of the Revolution. But of greater practical, day-to-day, significance was the fact that in much of urban France the first decade of Napoleon's regime had coincided with something of a recovery from the economic dislocation of the 1790s. The significance of this emerges from an analysis of popular politics in the faubourg St Antoine. This provided an acid test case for any post-Jacobin regime, for it had been the bastion of popular radicalism from 1789 until 1794 – and indeed was viewed still by one of the characters in Balzac's *Cousine Bette*, set in the Orleanist period, as 'the faubourg par excellence'. If the Bonapartist regime could contain the Faubourg St Antoine it could control anywhere in urban France.

The faubourg did contain some large industry in the textile, wallpaper, pottery and glass sectors. But it was known as the centre of small-scale production. The majority of its workers were skilled artisans in the furniture, small-metal, clothing and building trades. The average furniture workshop in the 1790s had employed four workers.

Some 70 per cent of the crowd which stormed the Bastille had come from the faubourg. And during the following five years artisans from the faubourg were

prominent in the personnel of the *sans-culotte* committees, vociferous supporters of the 'Republic of small men'. They remained suspicious of economic deregulation which, they felt, favoured the growth of large entrepreneurs. But the second half of the 1790s were disastrous years for these activists. On the one hand, the political backlash led to sustained persecution of the cadres of the Year II. Radical artisans were hounded by the police, jailed, released, re-arrested. Some were deported to Cayenne. Many had their small workshop enterprises ruined. But the faubourg also suffered profound economic crisis. Its population fell by nearly 20 per cent. Unemployment rose. Some 40 per cent of the population were indigents by 1799.

The economic boom of the 1800s undoubtedly helped win over some workers to Bonapartism. There was an upturn both in the artisan sector and in textiles and machine construction. Real wages rose. The regime subsidized bread in years of grain shortages. Remaining militants were 'saddened by no longer being able to arouse the *quartier*. They say the inhabitants have lost all their energy'. Returning army veterans brought tales of military exploits and of humilating reactionary nobles and priests. In 1806 there was some disquiet at recent labour legislation. But police reported that workers said that 'if the Emperor were in Paris he would not have allowed the laws to be passed' (Monnier 1981).

However, the crucial year for the formation of the myth of the 'people's Emperor' was 1815. When Napoleon returned for his 'hundred days' he despaired of winning back elite support and, like Mussolini in 1943, belatedly reverting to the radicalism of his youth, posed as the bulwark of the Revolution, champion of the ideals of 1789 – even 1793 – against reactionary clerical royalism. He received a tumultuous reception both amongst peasants in Burgundy, a region with bitter anti-seigneurial memories, and in cities such as Grenoble, Lyon and Paris. Waterloo did nothing to diminish this quasi-messianic appeal. The chronology of subsequent popular Bonapartism can be traced in police records of arrests for 'seditious cries' and similar protests. An incomplete listing of such incidents for the 1815–30 period by Ménager includes the names of 2,094 culprits. Of these, 799 were arrested in 1815–16 as the regime sought to consolidate itself. The subsequent high points were 1822 (295 arrests) and 1823 (360). The number then tailed off to around 20 per year in the late 1820s.

It is important to examine both the sociology of those arrested and the chronological fluctuations in their numbers. In 1815–16, as the Bourbons consolidated their regime and as ultra-royalist extremists persecuted their enemies in the White Terror, those unhappy at these events dreamed of a rapid return of Napoleon. Rumours that he had indeed returned swept central and south-eastern regions. Those arrested for 'Bonapartist' activities received harsh sentences. During the depression of 1817 there were food riots and Luddism – but overt displays of Bonapartist sympathy declined. Potential Bonapartists were possibly cowed by the harsh punishments meted out, disillusioned by the Emperor's failure to reappear or simply preoccupied with economic problems. However, Ménager urges caution in the treatment of his statistics. In east-central France, a region embittered by the behaviour of Allied troops in 1815–16, food rioters often insulted the white Bourbon flag and repeated rumours that Bonaparte was on his way from the USA with grain ships.

Bonapartist agitation revived in the early 1820s as the regime lurched to the right. Liberal revolt in Spain aroused hopes that Bonaparte would invade across the Pyrenees. Corrèze quarrymen greeted a liberal politician with Bonapartist slogans and in Arras cafés workers sang Bonapartist songs. In 1822–3 the Carbonarist movement reached its apogee. Its jailed or executed activists became popular martyrs. Carbonarism was socially and ideologically heterogeneous. Its activists included businessmen, liberal professionals, commercial travellers, students, NCOs and artisans. Subsequently Carbonarists became Orleanists, moderate Republicans or neo-Jacobins (Spitzer 1971).

In the mid 1820s the authorities were still worried by the dissemination of Bonapartist lithographs. In November 1827 police killed seven demonstrators in Paris as crowds chanted 'Long live Napoleon! Death to Charles X and the priests who wish to starve us!' And there were strong Bonapartist overtones to the July 1830 Parisian revolt which overthrew the Bourbons (Pinkney 1972a). The migrant worker Martin Nadaud portrays his father as a typical Bonapartist populist. As a peasant from the Limousin he shared that region's virulent anti-feudalism. His experiences on Parisian building sites had made him a labour militant. He was both a Jocobin and an admirer of the 'People's Emperor'. He and his fellow migrants were disappointed by the outcome of the 1830 insurrection in which they had fought: 'It was a continuation of the government of priests. What we needed was the son of the great Napoleon.'

Social analysis of Bonapartist sympathizers shows that these were drawn largely from the popular classes and from regions with previous and subsequent histories of radicalism. Of 2,094 arrested, 508 were artisans. Many of these were itinerant workers ideally suited to spread propaganda or rumour -as were the many coachmen, commercial travellers and colporteurs also arrested. A further 25 per cent of those charged were day-labourers, dockers, domestic out-workers – poor men for whom faith in a Bonapartist messiah was belief in a miracle which alone could offer hope for the future. One Midi beggar was jailed for shouting that Bonaparte was the only friend the poor ever had.

Ménager's statistics are deficient because they omit data from Paris. Here many craftsmen earned a living from making Bonapartist trinkets – jugs, pipes, medallions. Police strategy varied between regions, so it is not always easy to be sure whether a large number of arrests signifies wide popular support for Bonapartism or merely persecution of a dissident minority in a royalist department. Nevertheless, it is significant that Lyon had the most arrests, for it had been Jacobin in 1793 and had welcomed Napoleon in 1815. Its silk industry had flourished in the Empire but was in trouble in the 1820s. Police found it difficult to prevent the singing of Bonapartist songs in tight-knit weavers' *quartiers*.

Burgundy, Franche-Comté and Alsace were also trouble spots. These had prospered as commercial crossroads between France and her European empire until 1815, and suffered at the hands of Austrian troops after Napoleon's defeat. These experiences engendered a Jacobin-Bonapartist nationalism which proved long lasting. Indebted peasant smallholders provided rural support for this mood, but the real danger was viewed as lying in urban cafés where workers and garrison troops mingled and Carbonarist plots were hatched.

Manager emphasizes that one should not exaggerate the real threat posed to the Bourbons by these popular sentiments, which represented a mood rather than a 'party' with organization or strategy or capacity for effective political action. Yet it is significant both as an expression of latent political sympathies amongst workers and as an explanation for the subsequent meteoric political rise of Louis Napoleon in 1848 which relied on peasant and urban worker support. The key components of popular Bonapartist 'ideology' in the 1820s included:

1 An insistence that, unlike the 'divine right' Bourbons, the Bonapartist dynasty was 'legitimate' since it was the people's democratic choice.
2 A sense of shame, expressed by two masons arrested in the Allier in 1818, that whereas under Bonaparte France exported her revolutionary message to Europe, now she was herself subject to the whims of the reactionary Holy Alliance.
3 A belief – illusory or otherwise – that under the Empire workers had jobs and ate well, whereas now they were reduced to eating 'English potatoes'

> Depuis la légitimité
> Nous n'avons que la misère
> Mais nous avons la liberté
> De manger des pommes de terre

Louis XVIII, noted for his corpulence, was dubbed 'the potato eater'.

4 A fear that the Bourbons were reintroducing the rule of a reactionary, bigoted, superstitious and puritanical Catholic clergy. Bonapartism was thus heavily tinged with anti-clericalism. Napoleon was the subject of mock prayers

> Napoleon who art in St Helena
> May your name be respected
> May your reign return . . .
> May your will be done.

TOWARDS 1830: THE *BLOUSE* AND THE FROCK-COAT

Indeed anti-clericalism was a key issue on which the liberal bourgeoisie could recruit popular support in its struggle against ultra-royalism in the late 1820s (Newman 1974). The context of this political crisis was one of economic slump and social unrest. A 66 per cent rise in food prices in 1826–9 meant reduced expenditure on consumer goods, a textile recession and rising unemployment. Bankruptcy – or the threat of it – hit many small businessmen and retailers, whose political reliability as members of the National Guard on whom the règime relied to keep order became suspect. Declining profits alienated the bourgeois élites from a régime with which they already had serious ideological and cultural differences (Pilbeam 1989).

Yet police reports initially remained confident that workers' economic privations were engendering no political danger. Indeed the earlier 1816–17 economic slump had coincided with a decline in political protest, whereas the Carbonarist challenge

to the Bourbons in 1822–3 had been during a boom. From Montauban in the south west, scene of wool-worker Luddism, the authorities reported that 'the mass of inhabitants, completely preoccupied with its immediate interests and motivated by sensible principles and religious sentiments, takes little part in political discussions,, whose outcome they await without anxiety'. In St Quentin, textile workers made redundant by Alsatian competition held protest meetings – but a visit by the Dauphin 'calmed, perhaps converted, but in any event imposed silence in the agitators'. In Lyon, where 11,000 looms lay idle, local authorities did urge public works provision. 'Some people are seeking to profit from the situation by exciting the population to revolt.' However, 'the working class has remained . . . very peaceful' (March 1829) (Bourgin and Bourgin 1941).

Such complacency reflected an understandable belief that an alliance between disaffected bourgeois and urban workers was a remote possibility. In 1826 the Meuse prefect informed Paris of the threat that textile lay-offs threatened 'tumultuous if not seditious actions'. Police reinforcements might be needed for the petty-bourgeois National Guard was unreliable and one industrialist, a liberal ex-Bonapartist army officer, might seek political support from Bonapartist veterans employed in his mill. The Minister of the Interior said that there was no real peril for the industrialist, in the last resort, was sure to be 'interested in the maintenance of order'. Such confidence appeared confirmed in 1827 in Paris when shopkeepers in the Rue St Denis, initially sympathetic to a popular anti-clerical demonstration, themselves called out the National Guard to defend property when riot threatened.

Bourbon administrators based their self-confidence on rational socio-political analysis. Why should 'wealthy men, bankers, industrialists, run the risk of playing on popular passions'? Sadly for them, a strange alliance, by its very nature precarious and ephemeral, did emerge between the bourgeois opposition and elements of the popular classes in major cities. How was this achieved? Bourgeois propaganda emphasized political and cultural issues. not economic ones. The regime's increasing clericalism became one major theme. Doubtless the medieval pomp of Charles X's coronation in Rheims cathedral, the imposition of clerical headmasters on secondary colleges and similar issues were more likely to outrage bourgeois Voltaireans than the popular classes. Yet the popular support for Bonaparte's 'hundred days' had revealed genuine fears amongst peasants and workers alike, particularly in eastern France, of a return to a clerical-feudal tyranny. Peasant holders of former church lands were scarcely reassured when ultramontane catechisms and sermons called for a return of the tithe. And in a popular culture in which, at least in some regions, urban-rural barriers were fluid and porous, urban workers shared such alarm. Proudhon, the future 'anarchist' artisan-intellectual, was a teenager in the late 1820s. His peasant mother came from a Franche-Comté family with a heritage of 'anti-feudal' rebelliousness. His father was an artisan – small retailer. Proudhon's own formative political experience was the sight of revivalist missions preaching a blend of ultramontane Catholicism, ultra-royalism and anti-Jacobinism (Haubtmann 1969).

With the clerical threat so visible, liberal propaganda was well placed to exploit popular fears. A flood of cheap editions of anti-clerical classics – Voltaire, Molière's *Tartuffe* – were produced. In Rouen, where colporteurs and bookshops helped

circulate these, there were demonstrations – involving students and workers – against the missions. Béranger's anti-clerical songs were popular in workers' cafés. P.-L. Courier's pamphlets denouncing the sexual perversions of curés who sought, simultaneously, to clamp down on popular dancing and festivities also touched a popular chord (Zeddin 1970).

Unsurprisingly, liberal propaganda steered clear of economic issues, for there remained a gulf between bourgeois free-market nostrums and workers' nostalgia for a return to paternalistic dirigisme. The one major exception to this lay in the printing industry. Printers were a potential vanguard group amongst workers. They were literate, often read and discussed the newspapers and books which they printed. And no group were so alarmed by the censorship of the late 1820s which threatened their jobs. In 1827 the Paris police claimed that liberal publishers were laying off printers in order to get them to sign petitions against new press laws.

The regime remained convinced that such sectional concerns would be of little importance to a wider public and confident that fundamental contradictions between employers and workers would preclude any tactical alliance between them. This proved a fatal miscalculation. When in 1830 Polignac attempted a decorous coup by disenfranchising three-quarters of the 100,000 voters in the property-based electorate he provoked a Parisian insurrection in which popular insurgents did what the government had calculated to be a logical impossibility – carried out a revolution on behalf of their own employers. An urban popular class, the victim of a three-year long economic slump and still politically unorganized, allowed itself – at least in Paris – to be carried away by the liberals' rhetoric. After the July Revolution a 'Committee for National Recompensation' was established to aid the barricades' wounded heroes. When asked why they had taken to the streets, 76 per cent of these proclaimed that it had been to fight for 'liberty'.

It is not our purpose to provide a blow-by-blow account of the Paris insurrection nor of the manoeuvring which enabled its fruits to be harvested by a group of bourgeois notables – bankers, businessmen, lawyers, academics – who installed the Orleanist constitutional monarchy in self-conscious imitation of the 'Glorious' English Revolution of 1688. They duly purged the bureaucracy and army of aristocractic Bourbon supporters, but extended the franchise only to those 170,000 adult males who paid 200 frances per year in direct taxation. Their success was due to their own quick-witted improvizations – but, equally, to the absence of any coherent alternative, Bonapartist or Republican.

The majority of the insurgents were artisans. Of 2,800 casualities only 20 were students. Building-workers, 10 per cent of the Parisian workforce, comprised 32 per cent of those killed – possibly a testimony to the well-known taste of building *compagnons* for physical violence. Undoubtedly many of the barricade fighters were ex-Bonapartist veterans (Pinkney 1972a).

Once the royal army had been routed popular anger was directed against clerical targets, with mission crosses torn down, and priests forced to abandon clerical garb in order to walk the streets in safety. But what was absent in the aftermath of the rising was any coherent popular political strategy. Ménager and Pinkney are probably correct to claim that popular preference, given a choice, would have been for a neo-Bonapartist 'democratic monarchy'. But no Bonapartist leadership

emerged to tap this latent support. Republican militants were more active. But when J. Benoît, the Lyon silk weaver, shouted Republican slogans in the Lyon streets in late July the crowd attacked him (Benoît 1968; Bezucha 1975). Workers' euphoria at the insurrection's success blinded them to wider perspectives, lamented Republican leader G. Cavaignac: 'It was too difficult to make people who had fought shouting "Long live the Constitution!" ' comprehend that their first act after victory should be to take up arms to destroy it.' At least for moment, the people were 'content with fine liberal phrases'.

By the time workers understood the nature of the new regime the opportunity had been lost. Their definition of 'liberty' bore little relationship to that of the new government (Faure 1974). Workers petitioned Ministers in the confident expectation that they would introduce job-creation schemes, fix wage levels (*tarifs*), protect workers against new machinery, permit them organization rights and shift fiscal burdens away from indirect taxes. State officials retorted that they were amazed that workers who had fought for 'liberty' should, so soon, be uttering such heresies against the laws of the free market. The Paris Prefect of Police rejected these demands as 'contrary to their own interests and to the freedom that should be accorded to industry' – and organized a bourgeois militia to keep 'order' in the capital. He hinted that the petitioners must have pro-Bourbon affiliations.

The most eloquent denunication of this 'betrayal' of the workers came from print-worker A. Colin in *Le Cri du Peuple* (1831). To the cry of 'liberty', he wrote, 'the most enlightened people, the heroic population of the capital of the civilized world rose in indignation' against Bourbon despotism. They returned to work in the expectation of just treatment from their new liberal rulers. 'What a mistake! The people did everything – and no one wishes to do anything for it in return.' Those whom they had regarded as their defenders had betrayed them. Because the bourgeoisie 'had mixed their protest with ours, we thought them our friends! . . . We wish only to be happy as a result of our labours, and we actually imagined that we were the object of the solicitude of those wealthy capitalists who are enriched by our efforts; but it is not us they are concerned about – it is merely the product of our labour.' In short, workers had smashed the aristocratic yoke, only to 'fall under the domination of the financial aristocracy' who had first flattered, then deceived. And yet, Colin asked, was not wealth created by workers' toils, not by the idle rich?(Faure and Rancière 1976).

It is clearly rash to identify a 'new working-class consciousness' merely on the strength of the rhetoric of a few articulate Parisian craftsmen. The politicization of workers' sense of betrayal took time to emerge. Much of the unrest of 1830–1 remained 'economistic'. Yet the vocabulary of popular protest had clearly changed. Although the 'language of labour' may, as Sewell argues, have retained features which recognizably grew from the old corporatist idiom, 1830 did mark a watershed in worker discourse. Equally important, language became a weapon which structured workers' perceptions (Sewell 1980).

A number of themes stand out. The first is the image, used by Colin, of the Orleanist élite as the 'new seigneurs' whose despotism was based on banks not chateaux. The liberal rhetoric of the 1820s – portraying the nobles as idle, exploitative, unproductive – was now turned against the bourgeoisie. Secondly, the

Orleanist emphasis on legality and order was mocked as pure hypocrisy – for had not workers fought in the revolutionary *journées* which had put the regime in power. Thirdly, workers now proclaimed themselves as the truly productive and useful class. 'The wealth of states resides in the hardworking muscles [of workers] more than in the idle rich', affirmed Colin. In 1832 the Société des Doreurs of Paris began their association rulebook by claiming that they felt 'great and powerful thanks to the knowledge of the dignity of the man who works'. This theme became commonplace in the rhetoric of the period. In 1841, in his *Lettres aux Travailleurs* Rouen textile-worker Charles Noiret insisted 'he who does not work, neither should he eat' (Faure and Rancioré 1976; Charlie 1986).

Above all, workers now referred to themselves as *prolétaires* or as the 'working class' rather than talking of 'the people' or of specific crafts. This concern of the class to 'name itself' in order to explain its own condition stemmed, Perrot observes, from a response to a debate about it amongst bourgeois writers. The most virulent worker response came to those who were beginning to denounce the urban masses – the recent 'heroes' of the barricades – as barbarians, nomads, 'the labouring and dangerous classes' (Perrott 1985). In the Orleanist *Journal des Débats*, J. Bertin, appalled by the 1831 Lyon rising (see below), talked of that city as resembling a St Domingo sugar plantation where white planters were outnumbered 100 to 1 by black slaves. Such terminology outraged print-worker J. Barraud, who retorted that as a 'proletarian, son of a proletarian' he supposed that he must be a 'barbarian' too. How could Bertin imagine that Lyon silk-weavers – proud, literate, skilled craftsmen – were 'brigands intent only on pillage and plunder'? 'Pillaging workers' were, he added, 'like Miracles, one can only get the ignorant to believe in them.' Having denounced slavery and expressed the hope that slaves would soon be emancipated, he continued: 'Workers are *not* slaves, they still have, in France, rights as citizens and, without arrogance or pretension, they believe themselves to be as free as the men who employ them.' Bertin was, of course, at liberty to regard himself as a slave-owner when he met his own journalists and printers.

Barraud objected equally to claims that the workers were barbarians within the gates of French civilization – which could only be safeguarded by denying them the vote and using military force against them. Had he, therefore, forgotten that since 1789 it was the people who had defended France, the elites who had conspired with foreign tyrants? 'Poor proletarians! How low have we sunk! What a long way we have come since our Glorious Revolution! What changes have occurred since the glory days when the *Journal des Débats* filled its columns with our acts of disinterested heroism!' (Faure and Rancière 1976).

The political lessons of these experiences were soon being proclaimed. 'The great are only great,' claimed Colin, 'because we are on our knees. Let us stand tall.' *L'Artisan*, a short-lived newspaper founded in the aftermath of 1830, began its prospectous by asserting that 'the most numerous and productive class in society is, without doubt, the class of workers. Without it capital has no value'. The July Revolution had afforded the working class the first glimpse of these truths, so that it was just starting to understand 'what its role in the nineteenth century should be'. Three days in July had altered workers' place in society. Now, via self-

education, they must learn how to defend their interests (Faure and Rancière 1976).

This discourse was not the 'invention' of workers themselves. The contrast between 'productive' and 'parasitic' classes derived from the language of St Simonian disciples who sought to disseminate their thoughts to worker audiences in 1830–1 (Fakkar 1968). The concept of society evolving from a feudal-aristocratic phase towards capitalist industrialization derived from the St Simonians and, more generally, from the rhetoric of the bourgeois Revolution. But now workers were appropriating and extending this discourse, envisaging a new '1789' this time with a happy ending. They talked of a world where workers might enjoy the fruits of their own labour. Until that time arrived, however, worker rhetoric also included a ubiquitous *miserabilist* strand – present irrespective of the particular circumstances – in which they portrayed themselves as victims who, in the last resort, would fight and die, for they had nothing to lose. In this they were already talking the language of the Communist Manifesto whilst Karl Marx was still at secondary school (Gresle 1983; Holzapfel 1986).

POPULAR PROTEST, 1830–1834

For four years after the July days the regime faced almost continuous popular unrest – a phase ended only by the economic upturn of the mid 1830s and by ruthless police and legal repression. Much of this protest was rural. In 1830–1 there was widespread arson in the Normandy countryside, whilst at the opposite end of France mountain peasants in the Ariège fought a guerrilla war against forest guards seeking to exclude them from the woodlands in enforcement of the 1827 Forest Code. Significantly, 'traditional' forms of protest were accompanied by slogans reflecting the rhetoric of '1830'. Burgundian peasants demonstrating against the wine tax chanted 'No more taxes, long live liberty!' Food rioters in Louviers (Eure) shouted 'Long live liberty!, long live the Constitution! Give us bread!' (Merriman 1975).

Before the regime could impose its authority, industrial workers seized the chance to attack newly installed machines. Luddite outbursts occurred in Paris – amongst female shawl-workers and tobacco-workers – and in the provinces, amongst riflebarrel-makers in St Etienne, for example. Most embarrassing for the government was the attack by print-workers, 'heroes' of the July days, on printing machines at the Royal Print Workshops (29 July). During print strikes in the autumn workers urged the government to buy up and destroy the printing presses 'which serve only the interests of a few, and are contrary to "liberty" '. They added that 'the working class fought . . . in July 1830; it was not miserly with its blood; it thus desires some reward for its generous efforts'. The strikers were arrested for breaking articles 414 and 416 of the Code.

There were 89 strikes in Paris in 1830–3, 30 of them in 1830. With unemployment high and the new regime's police apparatus in place industrial protest lost momentum in 1831. An economic upturn in 1832–3 reduced the percentage of unemployed in Parisian workers' lodging houses (*garnis*) from 33 per cent to 10

per cent and stimulated a fresh wave of disputes as skilled workers exploited the market situation – 'when business is doing badly we know how to make concessions; when it is prosperous is it not strictly just that we should demand back what we have conceded?'

Concern with unemployment prompted calls for shorter hours by locksmiths' strike leaders, one-third of whose 13,000 members were jobless. Workers demanded public works projects – only to be fobbed off with 'charity workshops', little more than outdoor relief. Strikers also protested at the use of apprentices to do 'adult' jobs and at the fees charged by private job agencies. The most widespread strike demand was for a *tarif*.

In only five strikes – long and relatively peaceful – was there evidence of *compagnonnage* involvement, mainly amongst carpenters. Tailors, who tried to 'police' their own strikes to avoid violence, had to improvise their strike organization. Printers and shoe-makers, in contrast, utilized pre-existing mutual aid societies as strike committees – ad hoc and ephemeral. Strikers met in cafés on the city's outer *barrières* to exchange ideas, then marched from workshop to workshop to intimidate scabs (*renards*). The tailor Efrahem wrote a pamphlet calling for coordination of strikes between different crafts – a sophisticated plan, but over-ambitious given the persistence of inter-craft rivalries and the level of police surveillance (Faure 1974).

Furthermore, Efrahem's reasoned tone may have been out of tune with the bitterness of social tensions in a city which was devastated in 1832 by a cholera outbreak which claimed 18,000 victims (Chevalier 1973; Delaporte 1986). Social inequality before death was starkly revealed, for most victims came from the popular *quartiers* of the centre and the east. Class resentments were fuelled by the flight from Paris of many of the élite and by the sermons of pro-Bourbon clergy who proclaimed the plague to be divine punishment for the 'crime' of '1830'. Rumours spread that the government was poisoning the wells in order to decimate the working class. There was a brief insurrection in some of the streets worst hit by cholera.

As F. Delaporte has shown, medical experts were divided between 'contagionists', who argued that cholera was spread by contact, and 'infectionists', who saw it as nurtured by insalubrious habitats. But medical discourse mirrored the class cleavages in the city. 'Infectionists' refused to accept the logic of their own diagnosis and to argue that public money ought to be spent to provide popular *quartiers* with sewage and water systems. Instead they echoed the bourgeois consensus that it was workers' own depravity which produced the squalor which allowed disease to spread and which weakened their resistance to it. Before the cholera arrived expert opinion had insisted that such epidemics were typical of the squalid Orient and would not spread to the civilized West. The arrival of the cholera in the east end of Paris seems to have strengthened the tendency of the élites to talk of the workers as a distinct and inferior 'race', characterized by their lower level of civilization.

To what extent were labour unrest and wider social tensions channelled into anti-Orleanist political action? Was it significant that the 1832 rising followed the funeral of the veteran Republican General Lamarque, which had attracted a large procession of workers and political refugees – in sharp contrast to that of the

Orleanist prime minister Casimir Périer which had passed only through the élite area near the stock exchange? Those involved in the rising included a high proportion of building-workers and navvies. Twenty-nine per cent were construction-workers, 14 per cent labourers, 10 per cent metal-workers (Pinkney 1972b). It had occurred after a long period of high unemployment, which had forced skilled workers to take what jobs they could find, followed by the traumatic impact of the cholera. Republican pamphlets did try to tap the social bitterness in the city, urging workers to occupy spacious bourgeois apartments left vacant by the flight of the elites to the provinces.

Yet the overall impression remains one of political confusion. Much of the rhetoric of protest remained 'archaic'. Popular anti-clericalism was still rife, with nuns accused of mistreating the wounded from the July Days in hospital, clergy insulted in the streets and resentment at the sermons on the cholera. Popular Bonapartism was still alive, with hopes expressed that 'the little King of Rome' would arrive. Popular demonstrations urged a belligerent foreign policy, designed to challenge Metternich's hegemony in Poland and Italy. Such demands could have radical-Jacobin or Bonapartist overtones or, indeed, both. Some workers saw a revolutionary war as a useful device for ending unemployment, since the army would need boots and uniforms! Often this 'revolutionary internationalism' was mixed up with xenophobia. Once their native lands were liberated immigrant Italian and German workers would more readily return to them, hence ceasing to compete on the French labour market with native workers. Republicans did try to organize demonstrations of the unemployed – though there were clashes with employed workers who argued that incessant street agitation prolonged the atmosphere of uncertainty and thereby threatened job prospects (Faure 1974).

With the consciousness of workers so inchoate, many radical Republicans became convinced that a period of political education was a prerequisite for any further political advance. Despite this, the radical neo-Jacobin Société des Droits de l'Homme (SDH) began to recruit amongst workers. By 1833 it had some 3,500 hardcore members. Few of these were the unskilled workers active in the 1832 rising. Few came from the Parisian luxury trades or from the food sector. Building workers with *compagnonnage* links – masons, carpenters – were under-represented and Martin Nadaud, the young stonemason who did join, was criticized for this by his fellow workers. As late as 1840 when the building workers were involved in bitter and violent strikes in Paris, they remained largely apolitical. Trades who combined industrial and political militancy included tailors, shoe-makers – who between them made up 32 per cent of known SDH members – printers and furniture-makers. Grignon, author of *Réflexions d'un Tailleur*, tells how young bourgeois Republicans introduced workers to political books. Some SDH branches were organized on a trade basis. But there was a two-way interchange of ideas, for the SDH began to take up the ideology of producer associationism which was becoming central to artisanal 'socialism'

J. Merriman's monograph on Limoges permits an assessment of the impact of '1830' on a provincial industrial town which grew from 20,000 to 27,000 in the 1820s (Merriman 1985). By 1830 some 60 per cent of the city's households were working-class. The export-orientated porcelain industry was the main employer,

alongside textiles, shoes, brewing and printing. New workers' suburbs appeared on the town's edges, ill equipped with water, sewage, lighting and housing.

Popular culture appeared to be 'traditionalist'. Literacy levela were low, since workers' Limousin villages of origin had few schools. Popular religion retained an appearance of vitality. The butchers who had kept their corporate monopoly, were staunch Catholic royalists who held regular religious festivals. There were two hundred statues of the Virgin in the town, the missions were active in the 1820 and the boisterous rowdies of the *confrèries* were tolerated by the clergy as proof of continued religious fidelity. There were few signs of popular militancy. There were no strikes in the 1820s, and the first mutual aid society – of porcelain-workers – appeared only in 1829. Despite the habitual poverty of the local diet – based on chestnuts and rye bread – and job losses in the late – 1820s slump, the Bourbon municipality appeared confident that charity and provision of subsidized bread could contain social unrest. During the 1816–17 slump the prefect had reported that 'the misery here is great . . . yet the inhabitants bear it with a resignation that indicates a proper spirit and a profound submissiveness'.

The middle class had appeared more troublesome. They criticized the aristocratic mayor for neglecting the city's amenities in favour of his landed estates. Many joined masonic lodges and took liberal papers. They held political *charivaris*, involving 'young men whose social position should have rendered them more circumspect'. The liberal opposition, led by porcelain manufacturer Alluaud, criticized the regime for failure to build roads to aid Limoges industry. Anti-clericalism remained the focus of the most vigorous protest activity. Missions were attacked with stink bombs. The bishop was denounced for refusing to bury a Voltairean actor. In 1820 the cathedral clergy opened themselves to ridicule by insisting that the crowds of indigents waiting to receive food from soup kitchens near the cathedral should be sexually segregated and made to kneel before receiving their handouts.

After 1830 the city's middle class were fully enfranchised. Alluaud became mayor. Plans began for the building of roads and bridges. A bourgeois National Guard patrolled the streets. Yet order was not easily restored. Those involved in a mass demonstration in August 1830 against high food prices and unemployment were, however, reassuringly 'apolitical', illiterate, unskilled workers – who were promised food subsidies and municipal job schemes. More alarming was an assault on the *octroi* tax office in September 1830, led by young student radicals and petty-bourgeoisie – 'influential men who now desire an anarchic rising from which they have most to lose'. The authorities discerned worrying 'changes in ideas and hopes spurred by the Glorious Revolution'. The arrival of the new public prosecutor – a former liberal, turned conservative Orleanist, 'one of those cold, egotistical men who saw the July Revolution as nothing more than a mine to be exploited for their unlimited ambitions' – provoked a *charivari*. This form of ironic popular demonstration – a politicization of 'traditional' forms of community protest hitherto directed against dominant wives or other offenders against community norms – became a ubiquitous feature of political protest in towns and villages over the next twenty years (Tilly 1982). Theo Bac, a radical lawyer, defended it as a right, 'affirming in principle that this mode of expression belongs to the people'. The

mayor deplored the new fashion for 'large groups running through the streets, shouting *Vive la République!* and singing songs recalling the most disastrous period of our Revolution – accompanied by equally odious dances'.

Republicans sought worker support. They complained at the denial of political rights to workers who had 'begun and carried out the revolution'. A St Simonian 'mission' came to town to preach that the new elite were idle parasites. Workers arrested for a demonstration against the prefect in 1833 were no longer the unskilled – they included porcelain-workers, a clog-maker, a baker. Skilled porcelain-workers – turners, moulders, painters-on-porcelain – were now corresponding with fellow porcelain-workers in Vierzon (Cher) and Paris to compare wage rates, and organize strikes. In 1837 six porcelain factories were hit by a strike against wage cuts. Strikers drew up a document insisting that they were 'workers', not labour aristocrats. But it was clearly skilled men who led the conflict and whose grievances were articulated in its demands. They complained at being made to bear the costs of heating, lighting and tools. But they also claimed that wage levels should be sufficient not just for mere subsistence but to allow workers to 'truly live'. 'A man is not a machine, destined to eat and produce. Human dignity must be satisfied, and noble faculties not left to perish.' Workers needed leisure for education, for culture, for family life.

Both the nature and the scale of popular protest in the early years of the July Monarchy suggest that '1830' must be vieweed as a watershed. Some protest – particularly that of unskilled labourers – was obviously triggered by unemployment, by high food prices or by the cholera. The confused blend of popular Bonapartism, anti-clericalism and xenophobia suggests that popular politics remained largely inchoate. Yet none of this should be allowed to obscure the significance of

1 The sense of political betrayal experienced by many workers in the aftermath of the July Days.
2 The dawning awareness of the incompatibility of bourgeois and worker notions of 'fredom' in industry.
3 The new discourse about the 'working class' to which popular activists now had access.
4 The recruitment of workers into the Republican SDH – and, in turn, the espousal by Republicans of cooperative-associationist ideas favoured by artisans.

2

Artisan Attitudes: Craft-workers and the Origins of Associationist Socialism

LYON, 1830–1848

During the decades after 1830 Lyon established a reputation as the most radical of French cities. Marx called the Lyon working class 'the soldiers of socialism' and described the uprising in the city in 1831 as 'the first explosion of the French proletariat'. A century later the Soviet historian Tarlé claimed that that insurrection 'constitutes a turning point in the history of the working class not only in France but in the entire world'. During the 1848 Revolution worried bureaucrats blamed the city for 'corrupting' the politics of the surrounding departments, for the silk industry – whose workers were at the heart of the city's radicalism – dominated the economy of the rural hinterland. Proudhon whose idiosyncratic brand of 'anarchism' was influenced by the 'mutualism' of the silk-weavers (*canuts*) during his period of employment in the city, admired the 'enlightened fanaticism' of Lyon workers: 'I felt I should not find a second city like that'.

Lyon offers perhaps the model example for the 'radical artisan' thesis. Silk was France's major industrial export, and Lyon was the world's silk capital. The silk *fabrique* generated half of the city's income, and its produce was worth nearly six times as much as the next largest Lyon industry (Cayez 1978). Silk weaving was still organized on a classic three-tier system. At the top of the *fabrique* hierarchy were several hundred merchant-capitalists (*fabricants*), some of them large-scale entrepreneurs. Between 1830 and 1848 their numbers fell from 750 to 400. They secured orders, supplied raw materials and marketed the finished product. Weaving was still done in the workshops – usually also the homes – of some 7,000 master-weavers who, in turn, employed some 25,000 journeymen, apprentices and female assistants. In all, the silk industry, including auxiliary sectors such as dyeing, employed over 20 per cent of the entire population. Hence, the prefect claimed, 'The unfortunate position of Lyon is that it has really only one industry – and thus discontent is never partial but soon becomes general.' As F. Rude shows, the 1831 rising involved other groups of workers too – hatters, who had a long tradition of craft organization, building-workers whose strike had recently been defeated (Rude 1969). But the prefect's generalization had an obvious germ of truth.

Lyon's craft silk sector was beginning to be caught in the classic 'squeeze' (Bezucha 1974). To consolidate their international market, merchants cut costs by moving the weaving of plain silks to the countryside, where peasant-weavers, who lacked craft traditions and grew some of their own food, were willing to accept lower wages. Between 1820 and 1848 the proportion of rural looms in the Lyonnais *fabrique* rose from 10 per cent to 47 per cent. A second 'threat' to the craftsmen grew more gradually. A factory sector, located in the small *bourgs* of the hinterland, developed. Initially this was in the silk-preparation processes (*moulinage*) and in spinning. By the 1840s silk-weaving mills were appearing. Their workforce was recruited amongst peasant girls from surrounding hill regions such as the Ardèche. Often their wages were sent back direct to their fathers. These girls were fed, lodged in dormitories and closely supervised – often by nuns. Tight curfews were imposed on them so that they were marched straight from dormitory to mill on weekdays – and to Mass on Sundays (Strumhinger 1978a, 1978c).

The 1830 Revolution occurred in the midst of a prolonged cyclical crisis which accentuated the pressures faced by the skilled weavers. Unemployment was high and wage rates had fallen steeply since 1815 – by 30 per cent according to Cayez's study, by 50 per cent according to the weavers' own statements. The *canuts* used the opportunity opened up by the Revolution to call on the new Rhône prefect to support their demands for a fixed *tarif*. He was, however, disowned by the government when he attempted to arbitrate, and reminded of the sanctity of laissez-faire principles and the laws of supply and demand. This proved a prelude to several years of unprecedented confrontation. In November the weavers rose in revolt, took control of the city and were crushed by the armv in what socialist B. Mâlon later termed 'the first defeat of the French proletariat'. During 1832–3 agitation switched to the Conseil des Prud'hommes, the industrial court which – so weavers claimed – consistently gave judgments biased against them because it was under merchant domination (Bezucha 1971). Arnaud, a master-weaver who had been the victim of one such judgment, secured 4,000 signatures on a petition demanding greater weaver representation. The court was expanded from 17 to 25 in 1832, but the nine merchants on it could still exert their control. In 1832 there was bitter controversy when the court refused to accept the complaint of *tullistes* at recent wage cuts, and a strike ensued. By 1833 the prefect admitted that his hopes that the Prud'hommes would provide a forum for settling disputes were fading. The merchant members were hardliners. 'The Prud'homme who was a merchant remains a merchant, and the workshop master who is a Prud'homme considers himself not as a judge, but as a workers' representative.' The court, thus, became a 'battlefield' according to one merchant. By 1833 the government intervened to ensure that the merchants had a comfortable built-in majority. This was to be the prelude to a second explosion in 1834, when a strike escalated into another insurrection and further army repression.

Despite two crushing military defeats, the weavers remained determined to combat the structural threat to their crafts. They developed the first effective worker press in Europe, were in the vanguard of cooperative projects and provided some of the earliest recruits for the Cabetist socialist movement – as well as for the more revolutionary Blanquist secret societies.

However, before analysing this artisanal culture, some examination is needed of Lyon's traditions of labour militancy and of the impact of the Revolutions of 1789 and 1830. Only then can one assess the extent to which the militancy of the 1830s stemmed from a heightened political consciousness growing from the city's political experiences and traditions rather than simply being a reflection of the recent structural and conjunctural problems of the *fabrique*.

Weaver militancy in Lyon had a distinguished pedigree (Longfellow 1981). In 1744 and 1786 troops had been needed to restore order. Merchant dominance of the *fabrique* predated 1789 by at least half a century. Already by the 1740s the 'independence' of master-weavers was being eroded as they came to rely on single merchants to secure bulk commissions and market the finished fabric. They required a written permit from the merchant for whom they were working before being allowed to begin new work for a different *fabricant*. The 'unity' of the silk-weaving community was already a pious fiction. Merchants dominated the industry's lay confraternities and the tribunals which adjudicated disputes on quality of work. A weaver's petition of 1744 had denounced merchants as 'a troop of ambitious men who seek only to crush the weavers like wild beasts'. During five major slumps in the industry from 1744 to 1786 the weavers consistently urged the government to intervene with protective tariffs, state-funded public works or government orders. The only sign of a common merchant – weaver front had been in resistance to Turgot's attempts to de-regulate the silk industry. Merchants protested that this would expose them to competition from elsewhere in France, weavers expressed alarm that it would flood the labour market with less skilled labour and undermine Lyon's reputation for quality. In 1786 troops crushed a revolt which grew out of demands for a *tarif*. Three weavers were hanged. In 1789 half the looms in Lyon were idle, 20,000 workers unemployed.

Master-weavers made vigorous efforts to turn the Revolution to their advantage and to save their craft. They asserted their right to play a role in the primary assemblies which elected the Estates General. They denounced the collapse of the traditional *tarif* and deplored the de-regulation of the industry – a 'liberty (which) delivers the weaver entirely into the hands of the merchants'. They protested at 'dilution' by female labour. In 1790–1 they organized mass meetings, set up political clubs, ignored the Le Chapelier and Allarde laws which outlawed worker organization and sought, via political action, to reverse their recent defeat. Appropriating the discourse of the 'anti-feudal' Revolution they denounced the merchants as 'aristocrats of commerce' and, in 1793–4, they espoused Jacobinism in order to brand them as 'counter-revolutionaries'. 'Merchants have their feet on the worker's throats and tell him. "Think as I do, be a royalist, or else die of hunger." ' Weavers played a central role in the revolutionary bureaucracy of the Year II – providing 33 per cent of 176 known members of committees. No other city had such a high proportion of artisans in its Jacobin administration. For some weavers such posts provided a valuable salary during the prolonged silk slump. Some used their bureaucratic powers to turn a blind eye to pilfering of silk thread from merchants' warehouses.

However, their political influence proved ephemeral. Some fell victim to the federalist revolt in the city, more to the Thermidorean purge of 1794 and the

White Terror. Nor were political relations with the Jacobin leadership harmonious. Collot and Fouché, as R. Cobb remarks, ran Lyon 'with the mentality of colonial officials' and treated local artisan militants with hurtful disdain. But the weavers' real Achilles heel remained the economic situation of the silk industry. Paradoxically the demise of the aristocracy had hit the domestic market for quality silk, whilst the wars disrupted exports. After 1794 the *canuts* were exposed to the full force of merchant power in the free market and entered the new century exposed and vulnerable, without corporatist or political shields.

The *fabrique* had revived under the Empire, which had permitted French silks to dominate European markets. This nurtured a popular Bonapartism, boosted further by Napoleon's visit to Lyon during the 100 days in his new role as Jacobin-populist defender of the Revolution. Hence there was certainly a Bonapartist strand in popular political consciousness in the late 1820s when the rising tide of political hostility to the Bourbons coincided with the latest silk depression.

As already stated, the 1831 and 1834 revolts occurred in a context of structural change in the *fabrique* which posed a long-term threat to the survival of the independent, male silk-weavers – masters and journeymen – of the workshop economy. The first rising was triggered by the demand for a *tarif*, the second by disputes over the composition of the industrial courts. In both cases the *canuts* had sought and been refused the support of the Orleanist authorities. Orleanist rhetoric dismissed the rebellious weavers as 'barbarians', their revolt as a 'slave rising'. This was manifestly mere crude propaganda for the *canuts* were amongst the most skilled and literate workers in France.

However, one question remains to be considered. By the 1840s the *canuts* were widely viewed as politically 'advanced', a vanguard of the embryonic associationist labour movement, radical Republicans. Yet from what point can one date these characteristics? Can one argue that already by 1793 the silkweavers had come, precociously, to synthesize their prolonged struggle to defend threatened craft independence with their new-found Jacobin radicalism. Or was the heightened political consciousness of the Year II short lived? Did their Jacobinism become diluted into a vague Bonapartist populism? Was their level of political consciousness in 1827–31 really rather low? We have already cited J. Benoît's autobiographical anecdote which suggests that he and a handful of fellow workers received a hostile reception from the Lyon crowd in July 1830 when they shouted Republican slogans. Should one conclude from this that the 1831 conflict was essentially economistic in origins and that it was only during the subsequent prolonged disputes of 1832–4 that the important synthesis of neo-Jacobinism and associationist 'mutualism' was born?

To answer this a more detailed analysis is required of the relationship in the 1820s between popular political attitudes in the city and the 'mutualist' movement which emerged amongst weavers. Lyon hatters had, for most of the Restoration, used their mutual organizations as resistance societies. Then, in 1828, the master-weavers established the Devoir Mutual. This mutual aid association was explicitly 'apolitical'. F. Rude argues that, in practice, it evolved rapidly into an industrial resistance organization, a proto trade-union. But his analysis of its origins throws

interesting light both on the political tensions within the artisan world and also on latent conflicts between master-weavers and journeymen.

Despite the Bourbon authorities' complacent claims that neither the crisis within the silk economy nor the growth of the liberal political opposition had disturbed workers' political apathy, there is evidence to suggest that Lyon workers retained quite a high level of political awareness in the late 1820s, even if this found no clear, coherent expression. Lyon had been a bastion of populist support for Bonaparte in 1815 – and artisans were involved in the Volontaries du Rhône who had attempted to rouse resistance amongst the Dauphiné peasantry after Waterloo to the return of 'feudalism'. The authorities suspected a number of workshop masters of still harbouring Jacobin sympathies. During the 1816–17 depression there was talk of a 'veritable conspiracy of the rabble' inspired by English working-class agitation. In the early 1820s Lyon was the south-eastern stronghold of the Carbonarist movement and in 1826 the regime had found it impossible to stir up any enthusiasm in the popular *quartiers* for Charles X's coronation. And the late 1820s depression did little to endear the Bourbons to workers. One police report noted that 'they have little affection for the Monarchy and still experience regrets for the Imperial regime which they abhorred when it existed'.

Despite this the founder of the Devoir Mutuel, Charnier, was a staunch Catholic-royalist, a master-weaver who believed himself victim of merchant fraud. He blamed the *fabrique*'s crisis on the new laissez-faire ethos and hoped to persuade 'paternalist' Bourbon authorities to return to the guild structure. Only such neo-corporatism could guarantee the skills of Lyon's weavers and the reputation for quality of her products. The authorities turned a blind eye to his initial organizational efforts, but were unable to agree to his wider project. Charnier's second concern was with the authority of the master-weavers. The Devoir Mutuel's initial members were large five-loom masters, some of whom wished to use the organization to halt the 'ever-growing insubordination' of their journeymen. However mutualism soon outgrew these reactionary neo-corporatist beginnings. Mutualists' emphasis on the dignity of the weaver, on solidarity and mutual assistance, on the need to pass on skills through an apprenticeship system, aroused support among masters who shared neither Charnier's royalism not his nostalgia for guild hierarchies. By 1831 the Devoir Mutuel's heir, the Association Mutuelle des Chefs d'Atelier was receiving wide support (Bezucha 1971).

There is little direct evidence that the November 1831 insurrection, arising out of the *tarif* conflict, had any direct political inspiration. The mutualist association still expressly forbade political discussion – out of fears that this might sharpen internal conflicts between Carlist, Bonapartist and Republican weavers who shared common economic grievances. The *canuts*' battle-cry – 'live working or die fighting!' – had no party political allegiance. In the aftermath of the rising the weavers' paper *L'Echo de la Fabrique*, denied that 'any political goal had motivated the workers'. The police claimed, however, that there was evidence of planning. Mass meetings of 6,000 weavers had been held. 'These individuals have met together, they were organized, they formed a compact mass – and the masses have a sense of their strength which only evaporates once they disperse.' And in the demonstrations outside the town hall at the start of the rising were leaders of the

Volontaires du Rhône, a paramilitary group which had made an abortive effort to spread revolution into Italy. At the subsequent trial, the prosecution charged some of the accused of seeking to use the rising to establish a Republic. This was not pure invention. Republican journalists had addressed the crowds, reminding them of the broken promises of July 1830.

However in popular quartiers the firm contours of both Republican and class politics began to take shape between the risings of November 1831 and April 1834. Although the second insurrection emerged from conflicts over wages and the Prud'hommes its openly political characteristics could not be denied (Pritchard n. d.). New organizations had emerged to act as 'resistance societies' in 1832–3. The discourse of the workers' press underwent major changes. Instead of simply rehearsing the grievances of silk craftsmen, *L' Echo de la Fabrique* began to use the language of class. In May 1832 it called for a 'universal union', for the proletariat could only achieve a better future if it formed 'a single chain'. It denounced the 'financial aristocracy' for offering workers only charity. And whereas in early 1832, *L' Echo* claimed, 'our journal is entirely industrial . . . it is not political', a year later its editor gave a speech portraying a France divided into three classes: a privileged aristocracy of birth, a greedy, hedonistic bourgeoisie, and a suffering proletariat. This speech was significant as much for the location of its delivery – at a Republican SDH banquet – as for its class analysis. Workers often attended such banquets.

Republicans directed their 1833 *New Republican Catechism* at Lyon's workers and the Republican journal *La Glaneuse* made common cause with *L'Echo* on the issue of association rights, for a proposed government Bill threatened to outlaw the city's flourishing network of master and journeyman associations. *L'Echo* began to cite with approval Republicans' calls for voting and association rights for workers. In February 1834 the Republican *Précurseur* urged Lyon workers to realize that industrial and political issues were inextricably intertwined. Only associations could guarantee workers' rights – but only a republic could guarantee associational rights. Orleanist repression was, it claimed, uniting 'both the industrial and the Republican cause'. A joint Mutualist/Republican committee was established to combat the proposed new law.

Certainly the authorities appeared to do all they could by their actions to prove to the silkworkers the accuracy of the SDH analysis. In July 1833, in order to break a strike by master-weavers, the police raided *L'Echo's* offices, arresting 14 weavers who worked on the paper. The prefect made it clear that he had no intention of acting as conciliator in industrial disputes. The Mutualists, he insisted, were now an 'underground government' willing to foster 'the spirit of coalition, or rather of revolt'. As such they would be treated with due severity.

Thus although the industrial grievances of the weavers lay at the heart of the 1834 rising, as they had in 1831, there is little doubt that in the intervening 29 months there had been a widening of the workers' consciousness. Nevertheless, the weaver community remained a hierarchic craft society and frictions between masters and journeymen did surface. In February 1834, for example, there was an eight-day strike against pay cuts. The authorities were impressed by the ability of its leaders to halt work in almost the city's workshops. These leaders were small masters who succeeded, initially, in maintaining firm control, warning their

journeymen not to be provoked into violence by the merchants or by the authorities – whose intention, they said, was 'to make a purely industrial dispute degenerate into politics'. The strike committee was, for a while, successful in 'targeting' low-paying merchants and in persuading – or intimidating – those master-weavers who were not in the mutualist society to support the strike. However once strike funds ran out journeymen grew restless and there were signs that the strike would degenerate into violence. At that point the masters tried to call it off – only to find some of the journeymen attempting to organize a strike against the masters to demand compensation for pay lost during the dispute with the merchants.

Despite this problem in master-journeyman relations, the *canut* press was now using a rhetoric which expressed aspirations to working-class unity and which tried to play down craft divisions. And the involvement of Republicans in the weavers, struggle was becoming ever closer. One conflict which acted as a prelude to the 1834 rising involved the attempt of an SDH lawyer to speak for the weavers at the Prud'hommes. Rejecting a petition signed by 5,000 weavers, the prefect declared this to be illegal – and the lawyer was fined. The lesson from the episode, claimed *L'Echo*, was that Republican warnings that the Orleanist regime was an obstacle to any improvement in workers' situation had been vindicated. During the 1834 rising Republican militants, not only from Lyon but from small towns in eastern France, fought alongside the workers. In the subsequent trials the regime prosecuted some 550 Republican activists (Bezucha 1974).

The 1834 defeat forced Lyon labour leaders to change strategy. The laws of September 1835 tightened controls on the press and on political organization. Henceforth Lyon workers were wary of rash insurrectionism or open political activity. A variety of alternative tactics evolved. Some workers, including for a time Benoît, believed that the lesson was that there was need for a tightly organized, underground, neo-Babouvist organization, prepared to plan for the seizure of power (Benoit 1968). Some sought to use industrial action, as in 1844 when striking weavers sought to pick off individual merchants in a pay dispute. Others – or the same weavers at other times – placed the emphasis on peaceful associationist, cooperative activities. Lyon also (see below) became a stronghold for the social-pacifist Cabetist movement, the first mass workers' party in France.

The master-weaver – the key figure in the culture of artisanal politics – was an ambiguous creature. On the one hand he owned his workshop and looms, employed journeymen, apprentices and female assistants. Yet, on the other he was treated as a mere wage earner by large merchants who provided the orders and raw materials, sold the finished products and controlled capital and credit. Viewing themselves as independent producers, the masters found themselves treated by merchants as 'superfluous and useless intermediaries', obstructions to the rationalization of the industry. Master-weavers resented *fabricant* control of the Prud'hommes which allowed them to perpetrate 'frauds' such as refusal to meet costs incurred by masters who mounted a loom to prepare to carry out orders, only to find that fashion had changed and these were cancelled. They felt humiliated by having to carry a passbook (*livret*) as if they were mere labourers. Many found their independence curtailed by falling into debt to merchants from whom they had borrowed money in order to buy new Jacquard looms. Above all, they were

aware of the long-term threat to the skilled weaving sector from the merchants' strategy of rural dispersal, which exerted a downward pressure on wages.

Clearly there was no homogeneity among masters. 'Fancy' weavers and those with six looms or more made up an elite with greater prestige than 'plain' masters with two or four looms. Masters who worked for more than one merchant were less 'dependent' than those tied to one. Nevertheless, it makes sense in these years to emphasize the ideological unity of the master-weavers rather than to explore their diversity. It was this unity which gave them an undoubted hegemony in the city's popular culture and enabled them to draw journeymen into a common front against the merchants – despite occasional outbursts of independent journeyman action in their own Société des Fernandiers. Official reports spoke of 'the workers' or 'the weavers' in terms which encompassed masters and journeymen. And the *canuts*' own rhetoric emphasized worker unity, not craft privilege. When J. Benoît, a small master-weaver and future socialist deputy for Lyon in 1848, came to write his autobiography, he called it *Confessions d'un prolétaire* even if, by some definitions, he might be categorized as a small businessman. The aspiration to wider class solidarity was epitomized in 1844 by the collection of funds to help striking miners, fellow 'proletarians', in nearby Rive-de-Giers (Guillaume 1963). Hunt and Sheridan have argued that the fact that in Lyon mutual aid societies included masters and journeymen – building-workers and shoe-makers as well as weavers – is an indication that class consciousness and militancy should not be taken as the norm (Hunt and Sheridan 1986). What this may, more plausibly, be taken to show is that hierarchic divisions within the skilled trades were less significant than the division between them and the entrepreneurs.

The popular culture of *quartier* and workshop strengthened these trade solidarities. The Croix-Rousse *quartier* – in whose high-ceilinged apartments the majority of weavers sited their Jacquard looms, lived and worked – came to symbolize *canut* loyalities. It has its own song: 'The people of the Croix-Rousse are not dogs, / The merchants are idle good-for-nothings.' Its message was a statement of a sense of unity against the 'parasitic' merchants. Journeymen weavers, though migrants, were not alienated déracinés – for they came from villages in the Ain from which the masters themselves had come. They migrated along established 'paths to the city', found a network of kin and fellow villagers there to help them integrate. Many ate at the same table as the masters, drank in the same cafés and were treated – at least in the masters' budget accounts – as 'family' (Stewart-McDougall 1978).

This pattern of relationships allowed the masters to 'speak for' their journeymen. The 'typical' Lyon militant was a small-master, middle-aged, married, with children. An active wife prepared to spend her life feeding the master and his journeymen, tidying the workshop, keeping accounts and helping out with the weaving was an essential element in the *canut* economy. Sadly, the crisis of the weaving sector made it difficult for journeymen to marry and set up small workshops (Strumhinger 1977). The consequences for the city's family life were serious. Marriage rates fell, young women were abandoned by their journeymen lovers to cope with illegitimate children and job opportunities for women were increasingly located in the emerging mechanized factory sector – in silk preparation, spinning,

even mechanized weaving. The structural crisis of the *fabrique* resulted in a crisis of the artisanal family.

Master-weavers were literate and showed a keen interest in education. During the 1848 Revolution Lyon was to be in the vanguard of efforts to promote free, secular schooling. Seven newspapers run by and for workers were established in the city. Benoît's autobiography describes workers taking turns to read aloud in the workshops. At weekends readings were a part of the gatherings in the woods outside Lyon to which workers flocked for relaxation and to avoid police surveillance. Masters tended to be sober, puritanical, critical of excessive drinking and of prostitution. Police records suggest that the proportion of weavers amongst those convicted of criminal offences was well below their proportion in the adult active population. Understandably *canuts* were outraged by their depiction in the Orleanist press as savage criminals (Stewart-McDougall 1981).

This sobriety created certain problems. For the wider popular culture of the city contained more boisterous, Rabelaisean features. Like the austere Parisian artisans of the journal *L'Atelier*, the masters were keen to dissociate themselves from 'the bilge of the great cities' and to refute bourgeois sterotypes by distancing themselves from the tumultuous aspects of popular behaviour – Saint Monday, Mardi Gras, Carnival, *charivaris*, obscene songs. In 1848–9 the radical Croix-Rousse municipal council sought to ban the 'immoral disguises' of Carnival. Whereas in these years Midi villagers learned to use such festivities as vehicles for the expression of social and political protest (Agulhon 1982), *canut* militants were keen to prove that they – and the 'working class' more generally – could be respectable, serious. Only thus could they show themselves to be the moral superiors of the 'idle *fabricants*', worthy to run their own industry. They had some success in drawing younger journeymen into their serious-minded culture. Their newspapers learned to use serialized stories – *feuilletons* – to spread basic political message. Worker song groups and theatre societies sprang up around the cooperative movement. Despite this, Benoît confessed in his autobiography that he felt that the 1848 Revolution had been premature, since the task of educating and moralizing rank-and-file weavers for the arduous responsibilities of political democracy and industrial self-management was incomplete (Benoît 1968). During the Second Republic there were to be signs of tension between masters who ran the 'democratic-socialist' movement and the boisterous volatility of the young journeymen.

Furthermore one should beware of over-emphasizing the capacity of the strategies of the masters to set the tone of the labour movement in a city where the endemic crisis of the workshop sector produced indebtedness, misery and despair among weavers. For the victims of these economic pressures violent revolt or suicide appeared to be the stark choices available.

CABETISM AND THE ARTISAN TRADES

Amongst the political groups arguing for less desperate forms of action in Lyon, the Cabetist movement was the most significant – for it has claims to be the first genuine socialist 'party' with a working-class base. Analysis of the geographical

bastions of Cabetism suggests strong confirmation of the 'radical artisan' thesis. Its appeal appears to have been essentially to craftesmen caught between a dying world of the old trades and visions of a new world (Johnson 1974).

Cabet was a lawyer, the son of a Jacobin cooper. He had begun his career as a liberal sufficiently respectable to be appointed public prosecutor for Corsica in autumn 1830. After involvement in Republican workers' education projects in the early 1830s he had been exiled to England. Contact with Robert Owen convinced him that private property lay at the root of social injustice. After his return to France in 1839 he wrote *Voyage en Icarie* – a portrait of a model socialist society in which the young are taught at school to reject individualist selfishness and greed, censorship protects citizens from immoral values and direct democracy and communal control of industry allow modern technology to be used for the good of all. Women in Icarie enjoyed a degree of job equality.

Unlike the Fourierists, Cabet did not, at this stage, seek to create model communities but instead a workers' party to prepare the path to democratic socialism. One feature set Cabet apart from other labour leaders. In 1839–40 an economic slump had engendered renewed protest activity in France. Blanquist secret societies made an abortive coup attempt in 1839. In 1840 there were violent confrontations between striking Parisian construction workers and troops. Cabet's distinctive tone, in contrast, was one of the social pacifism and class conciliation. He refused to view the bourgeoisie as a reactionary bloc, maintaining that the majority of them were productive and industrious. Instead of driving the middle classes into the camp of the Orleanist plutocracy by insulting or threatening them, efforts should be made to woo them with rational arguments. By highlighting workers' misery one could appeal to their sense of justice. In the last resort the middle class's sense of self-preservation would lead them to choose reform in preference to class war (Johnson 1966).

This tone of moderation made it difficult for the Orleanists to prosecute him. His newspaper, *Le Populaire*, achieved a circulation of 4,500. Most subscriptions were collective, so that the paper was read aloud in cafés and workshops. By comparison *L'Atelier*, the journal of the Parisian craft elite, sold barely 1,000 copies. Cabet's paper used a simple style, striking slogans and lively *feuilletons*. It avoided theory, concentrating on vivid anecdotes of working-class suffering. It encouraged its readers to send letters to its correspondence column to tell of their experiences.

Working-class activists like Nadaud were to express gratitude for Cabet's willingness to act as defence lawyer in workers' trials and to admit workers to his home for discussions. But he had an authoritarian streak. He showed little tolerance for those within his 'party' who expressed reservations about his strategy. A 'workerist' dissident group emerged in Lyon, which warned that most bourgeoisie were wedded, in the last resort, to private property. They expressed sympathy for the Jacobin legacy, which Cabet rejected, and emphasized the need for internal debate within the movement (Johnson 1969). Cabet 'excommunicated' them. Cabetism remained strong in Lyon, but was only one among many radical groups. It won wide support in Toulouse after 1841 when Cabet helped to secure acquittal of tax rioters on a conspiracy charge.

Twenty-two towns provided over three-quarters of *Populaire* subscribers. These

were older craft centres with declining trades rather than factory towns. Of 497 known Icarian activists, 379 were artisans. Only 23 came from 'modern' industry. There were few luxury artisans amongst these, few small-masters or shopkeepers nor, despite Cabet's efforts, did he attract many bourgeois members. Tailors (89), shoe-makers (82), building-craftsmen (41), hand-weavers (37) and hatters (14) provided the largest contingents (Johnson 1971). Johnson argues that most were middle-aged, sedentary men from trades little prone to the violence which attracted groups who prized 'toughness' such as metal-workers and masons. Their trades were, however, under threat from new relations of production which subordinated them to merchant capital.

Shoe-makers were already feeling the impact of the introduction of nails and rivets which removed some of the expertise in making cheaper footwear (Scott and Hobsbawn 1980; Sibalis 1987). They faced competition both from provincial factories and from sweated out-workers. In 1833 Marseilles shoe-makers staged a partially successful strike, but thereafter the city's shoe trade was exposed to an influx of migrants, becoming an 'open' trade where craftsmen's neo-corporatist defences were overrun. In 1845 shoe-makers in several towns, coordinated by a strike committee, attempted to impose a *tarif* and reassert their controls over hiring. Their leaders were jailed. It is an open question whether these disputes should be viewed as symptoms of new radicalism or merely as the last gasp of neo-corporatist craftsmen seeking to assert a measure of localized bargaining power, as T. Judt maintains.

Repression of such strikes helped push shoe-makers towards Cabetism. Tailors faced similar pressures, for many no longer made entire items of clothing for individual customers. New department stores were selling off-the-peg clothing. The garment trade became controlled by *confection* merchants who relied on a few skilled workshop-based cutters augmented by a growing army of ill-paid out-workers – either women or 'sweated' male artisans now doing simple subdivided tasks. The number of such *appiéceurs* rose 1,000 per cent in Paris between 1830 and 1848. By that date two-thirds of 'bespoke' tailors worked in workshops – 75 per cent of them male. Conversely only one-sixth of *confection* workers were in workshops, and 60 per cent of such workers were female (Johnson 1978, 1979; Vanier 1960).

A Lyon workers, J. C. Romand, claimed in his *Confessions d'un Malheureux* that it was bankruptcy – which reduced him from master-tailor to menial sweated journeyman and forced him to sell his only prized possession, some antique bronze – which had turned him to politics: 'I spilled tears of rage and hated the [Bourbon] Government. I threw myself bodily into politics and waited for a popular revolt to take the biggest possible role in it.' In Paris one of the leading workers in the SDH was Grignon. In his *Réflexions d'un Ouvrier Tailleur* (1833) he lamented that ever-longer work hours denied tailors the chance of education. They were no longer treated as 'men', merely as 'playthings of the idle rich'. He called on tailors to demand a minimum *tarif* and to coordinate their action with other trades (Faure and Rancière 1976). Montpellier and Bordeaux tailors established producer cooperatives. Nantes tailors organized a network of resistance groups covering the towns of the west. In many cases master tailors made common cause with their

journeymen. Many such alienated tailors turned to Cabetism for consolation and hope. Its social pacifism suited the temperament of thoughtful men reluctant to espouse violence.

Cabinetmakers faced similar problems. The furniture makers of the faubourg St Antoine had been the archetypical members of the popular movements of 1789–94. In their sector, too, the effects of guild deregulation were compounded by the emergence of a ready-made sector for petty-bourgeois consumers run by 'interlopers'. By the 1840s the Faubourg had 20 furniture retail shops. Reduced to making low-quality furniture and, often, to doing repetative, subdivided tasks, cabinetmakers voiced their resentments in a rhetoric which invoked the threat to France's reputation for quality products. The decline of apprenticeship was making it impossible to transmit traditional 'artistic' skills to the next generation – all in the short-term interests of greedy merchants. Seventy-two per cent of Parisian furniture-workers still lived in the faubourg St Antoine, so their resistance efforts could rely on a strong sense of community solidarity. In contrast, most Parisian trades – with exceptions such as jewellery in the Rue du Temple or small engineering in Popincourt – were dispersed quite widely throughout the city. Cabinetmakers lived sufficiently close to the bourgeois *quartiers* to be aware of a sense of relative deprivation. At the same time, there was little intermarriage between skilled furniture craftsmen and the lower middle class. Cabinet-makers staged major strikes in 1840 and 1847. But many were attracted to Cabetism (Weissbach 1982).

The ideal-type Icarian thus emerges from Johnson's analysis as a middle-aged male artisan working in a trade in which he faced worsening conditions and a perceived threat to his skills and status – a threat which, as yet, came more from new relations of production rather than from the factory. Shoe-making and tailoring faced a particular threat from the government's willingness to grant concessions to entrepreneurs to use prison labour to undercut local wage rates (Perrot 1977). This was an issue in Niort, where shoe-maker Guay – a socialist election candidate in 1849 – was the Cabetist leader.

Cabetism was also strong in Vienne and Rheims, both 'old' textile towns where handloom weavers faced the threat of mechanization. In Rheims Icarian support was amongst the city's 7,500 weavers, with the 3,000 factory spinners less responsive to socialist propaganda. Handloom wages had fallen since the 1830s from 2 francs to 1 franc per day. Vienne was undoubtedly influenced, as the subprefect lamented, by its proximity to Lyon. There were 4,000 wool-workers and a vigorous culture of workers' songs and poems. Strike defeats in 1841–2 turned weavers towards Cabetism. F. Rude claims that there were 500 Icarians in the town by 1847, and the highest per capita subscription rate to *Le Populaire* of any French town.

Insight into the mentality of Cabetist workers is afforded by the letters, ill-spelled and touchingly naive, which they sent to *Le Populaire* detailing their grievances and hopes. C. Johnson points to their explicit religiosity and near-messianic tone. Cabet argued that socialism was the authentic expression of Christian values betrayed by the priests. Many of his supporters lived in communities where traditional religious culture had been powerful. Cabetist workers may, thus, have combined a degree of anti-clericalism – directed against clergy who allied with the rich – with a

willingness to respond to a rhetoric which argued that 'socialism' was Christian fraternity in action.

This element of quasi-religious messianism became increasingly central to Cabetism. Cabet had hoped or persuade the bourgeoisie to accept peaceful social reform. Johnson claims that events in 1845–6 shattered his illusions. As economic depression exacerbated social tensions the bourgeoisie seemed singularly deaf to Cabet's appeals to either their sense of social justice or of self-preservation. Even Ledru-Rollin, the barrister who led the Republican radical left, appeared to be drawing a clear distinction between his brand of democracy and socialist collectivism. Johnson's claim that this shattered Cabet's faith in middle-class support for the workers' movement may be true, but it does raise one or two problems. For (see below) many Republicans did surely continue to give at least rhetorical support to associationist/cooperative ideas and in many cities and towns (Toulouse, Toulon, Niort) where Cabetism had popular support bourgeois Republican notables appeared still to enjoy good relations with workers' leaders.

Nevertheless, there was a discernible toughening in Cabet's tone. He denounced the bourgeoisie as a 'caste', urged workers to 'close ranks' and not to be dupes of middle-class reformers. But he was trapped in an insoluble dilemma, unable to go further down the road of class confrontation without admitting that those he had expelled from the party had been proved correct. Already in Lyon some Cabetists were moving closer to Blanquist revolutionary groups. Aware of the probability of a class war which he was unwilling to accept, he gave way to the implicit religious messianism in his character. Adopting the patriarchal role of 'Père Cabet' he informed his disciples that social justice was impossible in France and could only be found in emigration to the New World to establish a model Icarian community. *Le Populaire* subscriptions fell by 30 per cent in 1847. Sixty-nine Icarians left the Texas – and others prepared to follow. Cabet's critics like Flora Tristan had always accused him of being an *endormeur*, lulling workers to sleep with rosy fantasies of social harmony. Now his emigration call was denounced as pure escapism. Suggestions were made that he had become senile – or been bribed by the government to confuse the workers. When Revolution came in 1848 Cabetists played a role in provincial political life in the spring, before the 'lyric illusion' of class cooperation was shattered by the June insurrection. Disillusioned, Cabet finally quit French politics.

VARIETIES OF ASSOCIATIONISM

For some artisans Cabetism represented a brief phase in an ongoing political evolution. Wahry, a strike leader of 1840, flirted with it before becoming a leader of the cooperative movement in 1848. 'Associationist' cooperative ideology has, indeed, been identified by B. Moss as the central plank of the 'socialism of skilled workers'. Moss argues that this was a 'home-grown' artisan ideology which emerged from workers' own experiences and which only subsequently was given formal expression in the writings of Louis Blanc and others. The workers involved

should, he argues, be defined as 'artisans' only with caution. Profound changes had taken place in the workshop world since the era of the *sans-culottes* – even if there were still relatively few factories. Skilled workers were suffering from the impact of the division of labour, dilution, 'sweating', flooding of the labour market by migrants. They were working longer hours, faced speed-ups – and yet, as Rougerie shows, their real wages were falling (Rougerie 1968). Per capita meat and wine consumption in Paris fell in the 1830s and 1840s. Only 5 per cent of printers earned more than 5 francs per day, 14 per cent earned under 3 francs. Many skilled men faced long 'dead seasons' with protracted lay-offs forcing them to take labouring jobs if these could be found. The absence of wide pay differentials helped to prevent the emergence of any socially or politically significant 'labour aristocracy' in most trades.

Hence there existed in France a sizeable stratum of urban workers who were not a classic factory proletariat, but to whom the term 'independent craftsman' can no longer accurately be applied. Yet such workers still had the know-how to envisage the possibility of running their own industries. The producer cooperative appeared to offer a plausible way of allowing them to pool resources in order to resist the threats to their craft. New technologies could be introduced – but with worker control of production and with the benefits not being siphoned off by parasites. This 'federalist trade socialism' should, Moss claims, be viewed as the core ideology of French labour until the 1870s (Moss 1976).

Moss's thesis is essentially Marxist in that it claims that associationist ideology stemmed directly from the workshop experience of threatened artisans, just as 'proletarian' consciousness is supposed to be engendered by factory experience. Moss, however, argues that given the realities of French industry in the 1840s this ideology was not, *pace* Marx, 'utopian'. Some critics have suggested that Moss's account of the relationship between workers and associationist theorists like Blanc and Buchez is unconvincing. There may also be difficulties in reconciling his claim that associationism emerged because of the threat of proletarianization experienced by groups of skilled workers in the 1830s with his suggestion that this basic ideology altered little over the remainder of a century of technological change.

The idea of producer cooperative obviously did find vigorous support among articulate workers. In 1833 striking tailors established a cooperative. In a pamphlet of the same year print-worker J. Leroux offered an eloquent justification of the idea of associationism. The abolition of ancien regime corporations had weakened worker solidarity. 'This is not liberty – let us not profane the word – it is isolation.' 'Our class', he claimed, 'does not exist. There were only individual compositors.' And individual print-workers could not, on their own, successfully resist new technology or wage cuts. A pool of unemployed labour gave employers the whip hand. But by pooling resources, workers could harness machines to their own needs, maintain wage levels, pass on skills to the young, provide for the jobless and the sick. Fellow printer Bonnet envisaged a system where 'machines will augment production, to the material and moral benefit of all'. He praised SDH tailor Grignon for his work with cooperatives in his industry, cited Robert Owen – and urged workers of all trades (*corps de métier*) to unite, since all faced comparable problems (Faure and Rancière 1976).

Bonnet also warned against futile violence – a theme reiterated by Charles Noiret's 1836 *Mémoires d'un Ouvrier Rouennais* in which associationism was proposed as the alternative to counter-productive class warfare. By 1840 when he wrote his *Lettres aux Travailleurs* Noiret's vision was bleaker, his tone more militant. He feared that cooperative would face many pitfalls, might simply replicate the anarchy of capitalist production. He warned of the danger of employers establishing tame, anodyne cooperatives which sought the collaboration of capital and labour.

Thiers' lament in 1832 that 'associations are the malady of our age' proved prophetic. The repressive laws in 1834–5 only added to their myth. 'Freedom of association' became a battle-cry for Orleanism's working-class opponents. Doubtless some workers hoped that the formation of cooperatives might prove a practical way of defending one's trade without running the risk of direct confrontation with troops and police.

The most vexing problem for the social historian is to judge the relative importance for the spread of the associationist myth of workers own industrial experiences, on the one hand, and of the influence of socialist writers on the other. One might suggest as a tentative hypothesis that such writers made two contributions. Firstly, by offering systematic blueprints for the working of an associationist society, they helped clarify values shared by many skilled workers – but also helped to make clear important differences of emphasis. Secondly, they helped mould the embryonic labour movement by coining key slogans with which workers became familiar and around which they could mobilize.

The central ideas and possible influence of three keys associationist writers – Blanc, Buchez and Proudhon – need, now, to be discussed before proceeding to an analysis of two stimulating recent attempts to explain the popularity of such ideas in these years. One of these claims that their appeal lay in their capacity to tap the underlying Christian-fraternal values of a working class not yet divorced from religious culture. The second argues that the important factor was the ability of associationist ideas to blend with the solidarities of the corporatism of the *compagnonnages* which survived by adapting flexibly to the post-Revolutionary world.

Louis Blanc

Blanc's distinctive contribution was to fuse the associationist idea with the Jacobin-Republican political tradition (Loubère 1959). His qualifications for becoming a guru to the embryonic labour movement do not appear, at first sight, too impressive. He was the son of a Legitimist family from the Midi. The year 1830 ruined his chances of using family connections to make a career. After a period as a private tutor to an iron-foundry owner's family near Arras he became a journalist for a moderate Republican journal which viewed education as the key to resolving the social question. Only by the late 1830s did he become more radical – opposing, for example, Orleanist support for private rail companies. His key work *L'Organisation du Travail* [1840] had been through five editions by 1848. It argued that a Republican government, elected by universal suffrage, was a prerequisite for any associationist transformation of the economy. The Republic should coordinate an economy based around producer cooperatives which it should stimulate by offering

cheap credit and state orders. 'It is necessary to use the whole power of the State. That which the proletariat lack to free themselves are the tools of their labour. These the government must furnish them.' If workers did not have the state as an instrument of their emancipation they would face it as an obstacle to that emancipation. For an interim period the cooperative sector would cooexist with private industry – but, in time, the former would triumph, for it would have the enthusiastic support of its workers. Like Fourier he hoped that benevolent bourgeoisie would support cooperative projects. He sought support of the smaller industrialists by warning them that in a free-market economy they would be swallowed up by the industrial oligarchy. He envisaged a wealth tax: 'Let the State put to work the opulence of the rich by becoming the banker of the poor.'

Blanc's image of French industry was not based on the locomotive works at Hallette, employing 600, for the children of whose owner he had been a tutor. He chose to study Troyes bonnet-makers – 2,850 workers employed by 1,120 masters at an average employer: worker ratio of 1:2.3 (Rose 1979). He gave little thought to the problems posed by the heterogeneity of the 'working class'. He wrote as though the only significant class division was between the Orleanist oligarchy and the people. Blanc was prone to the illusion that persuasion could generate fraternity, that the bourgeoisie could be won over to the belief that capitalism was unfair and inefficient. 'All men are born brothers all interests are interdependent. Democracy is like the sun, it shines for us all.' A Republic would harmonize interests, allow the good in human nature to triumph.

Blanc wrote for the radical journal *La Réforme*. His importance was in his apparent ability to offer associationism a political goal – and Republicanism a social programme. His 'organization of work' idea became a popular slogan of 1848 – inscribed on workers' banners in the street demonstrations of the February Revolution. But he had critics on the left. Blanquists warned that without the education of peasant voters, universal suffrage would prove 'reactionary' – and that, since the plutocracy would never concede power willingly, a period of revolutionary dictatorship would be necessary. Fellow 'associationists' were suspicious of the large state role envisaged by Blanc in the cooperative Republic.

Buchez, 'L'Atelier' and Christian-Socialism

Buchez, a doctor with experience of working-class poverty, had been a Saint Simonian in the 1820s. He came to reject the technocratic and hierarchical elements of this creed, and attempted thereafter to blend together a Saint Simonian mode of analysis with an idiosyncratic Christianty and support for political democracy and producer associations. After 1831 he ran workers' education courses in Paris, which brought him direct contact with artisans whom he admired as 'gifted men'. He acted as a synthesizer of ideas and as intermediary between 'utopian' socialist writings and the vanguard of the Parisian trades. From Saint Simonianism he derived some of his vocabulary: 'the exploitation of man by man'; the Orleanist elite as 'pure parasites'. Like the Saint Simonians he urged economic 'organization' – but his concept of this was egalitarian. His associationist ideas, outlined in *The Means of Ameliorating the Condition of Urban Wage-Earners* (1831), inspired the

workers who established the paper *L'Atelier* (1840). Buchez granted the state a smaller role than that envisaged by Blanc. Factory workers, who were 'cogs' in the industrial machine and lacked capacity for self-organization, should be protected by state officials who might fix minimum wages and intervene with employers. State funding might help pump-prime embryonic cooperatives. Beyond that he put his trust in the capacity of artisans to run their own producer associations and to put aside a proportion of their 'profits' for investment. Under the influence of *L'Atelier* he came to argue for a pluralistic system of small cooperatives which would have scope for limited competition and for 'profits'. He thus rejected Blanc's idea of a single state-sponsored cooperative for each industry. In a rhetoric with proto-syndicalist overtones, he argued that workers who looked to the State for emancipation were like slaves who expected their masters to liberate them.

Was *L'Atelier* a genuine workers' newspaper? Are not workers who become journalists in effect *déclassés* engaged in setting up ideological systems which purport to express workers' aspirations but which may, in fact, distort them? The paper's austere tone did, indeed, lead to doubts about whether its editorial group could really be categorized as 'workers'. Martin Nadaud sought to refute such scepticism by insisting that most of them did still work with their tools by day, taking up their pens only in the evenings. Of 75 known members of the editorial board one-third were printers; most of the remainder belonged to such crafts as bookbinding, jewellery and carpentry. Gilland, a worker-poet, was a locksmith. Corbon, a leading editor, was a wood-sculptor (Cuvillier 1954). Their political backgrounds were diverse. C. Chere had fought on the barricades in 1830, supported national liberation movements, joined the SDH and then been converted to a form of social Catholicism by Lemennais. Some were ex-Babouvists. One or two were wooed away from the rival journal *La Ruche Populaire* which they had come to see as too wedded to Saint Simonian technocracy (Altman 1974).

L'Atelier shared Blanc's ideal of a democratic Republic, rejected Blanquist insurrectionism and communist collectivism and materialism. Violence and the spoliation of the rich were not, it argued, its goals. This 'moderate' tone meant that only once did the regime seek to prosecute the paper. Yet it is misleading to regard its message as one of class collaboration. Its demands reflected those of the strikes of 1840, in the aftermath of whose repression it was founded. Its editors viewed themselves as interpreters of the views of their class, not as mouthpieces for Buchez's ideas. Their rhetoric was 'workerist' in tone. Workers interests in better wages and the interests of capitalists were mutually contradictory. Talk of exploitation of child labour, of 'sweating', of falling wages was no mere exaggeration but the 'rigorous truth'. The paper was sceptical of the overuse of the strike weapon, but it supported workers' demands for a minimum wage, shorter hours, greater representation on Prud'hommes which should, it argued, develop into arbitration boards with powers to inspect work conditions. It denounced subcontracting and private job agencies which exploited jobless workers.

Above all it emphasized worker dignity. 'One has to have been a worker oneself to become aware of the wounds inflicted on workers' dignity'. It was suspicious of Saint Simonian technocrats and of the motto of the Fourierist Considerant 'Capital, Talent, Labour', for 'we are tired of exploitation of all sorts – and even, it must

be said, that of 'Talent'. Their concern appeared to be for journeymen more than masters, even criticizing some Lyon *canuts* for acting like petty-capitalist employers. They urged workers to emancipate themselves. There would be no new 'night of the 4th August' on which the new capitalist *seigneurs* would voluntarily renounce its privileges. They supported the Chartists against the Anti-Corn Law League. Although sharing Buchez's concern with universal suffrage which might achieve useful reforms, they remained suspicious of all politicians – even if their main target was the Orleanist oligarchy which shot down Rive-de-Giers miners (1844) 'like rabid wolves'.

L'Atelier's influence is not easy to measure. Its one thousand subscribers included some bourgeois. Its tone was sober, moralizing. Perdiguier, the cabinetmaker, said that its language was too erudite for all but a minority of self-educated workers. But its stalwarts included men like locksmith Gilland, prominent in the cooperative movement of 1848. And other workers recognized the *Atelier* group as a vanguard. In 1845 when Paris workers petitioned against the *livret* (obligatory passbook) it was to them that they turned to present it to parliament. For all their reservations about strikes *L'Atelier* printers like A. Boyer were in the forefront of efforts to secure a *tarif* in their industry.

Could one argue that *L'Atelier's* rejection of the materialism, atheism and pretrophobia of some on the left helped to ensure that associationism was much less anti-religious in tone than the popular radicalism of earlier years? Was a form of christianity, even of dissident Catholicism a – even the – key component of artisan associationism? Their intellectual mentor, Buchez, was a maverick social-christian who dreamed of a fruitful synthesis between 1789 and Catholicism – to christianize the Revolution and revolutionize the church and show that the divorce between them had been a mere accident. *L'Atelier's* brand of christianity emphasized redemption, not original sin, and flirted with the heresy that the Kingdom of God could be built on earth. It was deeply suspicious of papal temporal power – 'the more the King is revealed, the more the Pontiff is hidden'. It advocated popular election of bishops and condemned most clergy as reactionary. It hoped for a young generation of democratic priests and saw christian 'charity' as an insult to the poor. It deplored the efforts of priests to exploit popular credulity through 'miracles' such as the Virgin's recent 1846 appearance to peasant children at La Salette (Isère) – where she had claimed that she was weeping because the Bourbons had been deposed, and that the recent crop failures were a sign of Divine anger! Yet they were suspicious of Voltaireanism. Was not Voltaire a supporter of enlightened despotism, and were not the Orleanist oligarchy his intellectual heirs?

The tone of *L'Atelier* was one of puritanical austerity. The responsibilities of popular journalists were those of a 'moral priesthood'. It deplored much of popular culture – obscene café songs, inter-*compagnonnage* brawls, the 'orgies' of Carnival, the tradition of 'Saint Monday'. To sustain their claim to be the productive class, workers had to be seen to be sober, industrious: dignity ranked above prosperity as a priority. The religion of money was an English materialist heresy. 'We do not', *L'Atelier* insisted, 'plead the cause of the material uplifting of workers but that of their freedom and dignity'. Education and moral reform of workers' culture

were prerequisties for real social change. They doubted whether their fellow workers had – as yet – the qualities needed to run an Associationist Republic.

Ed Berenson has argued that though *L'Atelier* was *sui generis* – the vehicle for an elite of Catholic skilled craftsmen – it typified a wider phenomenon. Associationist socialism should, he claims, not be interpreted simply as the response of threatened artisans – or indebted cash crop peasants – to cyclical and structural economic pressures. Its ideology was rooted in a still-religious popular culture (Berenson 1984). The rhetoric utilized to woo popular audiences tapped a rich vein of 'unorthodox' christianity. 'Dechristianization' was not, thus, a prerequisite for the conversion of workers or peasants to the left – for such strata were responsive to a moral critique of the parasitic rich couched in scriptural terms. In 1842 a left-Republican 'political dictionary' claimed that 'Christianity is the religious dogma of equality, democracy is the political expression of that dogma. And Association is the practical means by which it can be achieved.' Hence radicals could espouse religion without appearing to support those in power. Blanc rejected the 'insolence of scepticism' and insisted that the left was more 'religious' than Voltairean Orleanists who in 1830–1 had – so he claimed – instigated anti-clerical assaults on the mission crosses at a time when workers' priorities were jobs and bread.

Berenson views Lammenais's social-Catholicism as a major element in the populist critique of soulless Orleanist free-market ideology and in the rhetoric of fraternity which was shared by bourgeois radicals, socialist writers, artisans and peasants. Leroux, who ran a cooperative print-works in the Creuse, claimed that 'true' Christianity valued solidarity not charity, that the early church elected its clergy and that Liberty-Equality-Fraternity were the 'modern Trinity.' Esquiros was jailed for his *Evangile du Peuple* (1841) portraying Christ as a *sans-culotte*.

Berenson thus characterises the rank-and-file of the 1840s popular movement as 'anti-clerical believers'. Hence Engels' notorious outburst – 'it is . . . remarkable that French Communists, belonging to a nation well known for its unbelief, are themselves Christians'. As noted earlier Cabetism increasingly took on overtones of a religious sect. Cheap editions of Lamennais's *Livre du Peuple* (1837) – showing Satan, God of the Rich, defeated by the poor man's Christ, – were distributed by colporteurs. 'Jesus the Worker', scorned by the rich but shielded by the poor, appeared regularly in colportage literature. With many clergy preaching a religion of fear so – one might argue – popular religiosity focused on the more tolerant and forgiving figure of Christ, the poor man's friend.

The tone of associationist propaganda was frequently millenarian – offering a blissful future beyond the miseries of the capitalist present. Cabinet-maker Perdiguier hated priests, never set foot inside a church – yet saw himself as a believer. In 1848 ribbon weavers in St Etienne replied to a question on the state of religion and morality in the town in a highly revealing way.

> To reply sensibly to this question one would have to know what one means by 'religion' . . . If one means simply . . . observation of external practices, there is, in that case, plenty of religion amongst women . . . but little amongst men. But if one means sentiments of the existence of God, love of one's fellows and of justice, in this latter case we will reply there is plenty of religion. (Courtois and Richer 1959)

The problem with Berenson's thesis is that he has presented a rather too one-sided analysis of a significant, but highly complex, issue. It is, for example, misleading to portray Orleanists as still inexplorably linked to the Voltairean scepticism with which they had been associated during their battles against Restoration clericalism. Many conservative Orleanists in the industrial Nord were already drifting back to the Catholicism as bastion of a threatened social order (Trénard 1965). '*Les chrétiens de la peur*' pre-dated the Revolution of 1848. There *did* remain areas of friction between Orleanists and Legitimists on the 'social question'. Issues such as child labour, the effects of female factory work on family life or Sunday work allowed Legitimist clergy an opportunity to denounce 'heartless' Orleanist free-market ideology.

In a Pastoral letter Mgr Giraud of Cambrai insisted that 'religion protests at the exploitation of man by man. Whoever speculates on fellow human beings as on lowly cattle' was a Germanic vampire. However, such social Catholicism was indeed, the holy water with which priests consecrated the heartburn of paternalist aristocrats. It was couched in the rhetoric of charity not of social justice. Duroselle argues that it evoked an idealized ancien regime of benelovent paternalism – and was deeply offensive to many workers who had no wish to be grateful, deferential recipients of charity (Duroselle 1951; Droullers 1961, 1964).

Berenson is surely mistaken, too, in claiming that outbursts of anti-clerical violence were primarily carried out by bourgeois Voltaireans. Certainly Phayer has argued that the scenes of sacrilege which occurred in 1830–1, when crowds smashed and urinated upon mission crosses in some 110 locations, were instigated by young Orleanist or Republican bourgeois. However he offers no evidence for this beyond the dubious claim that the revivalist missions of the 1820s and the growth of the Marian cult in the 1830s signify increased popular religiosity. However, diocesan studies provide little support for this thesis and, indeed, point to a groundswell of popular anti-clericalism in those years (Phayer 1978; Marcilhacy 1964).

Nor is Berenson's wider analysis of popular religious sentiment entirely convincing. He argues that the clergy made themselves unpopular by puritanical campaigns against dancing and the 'excesses' which traditionally accompanied religious fetes and also by their purist campaign to purge popular religious practice of its 'superstitious' elements. The resulting 'anti-clerical' backlash he interprets as a protest of essentially loyal 'traditionalist' believers outraged by innovations. This created a potential audience of christian believers who were open to the influence of the left, which could shrewdly blend anti-clericalism with a claim to be defenders of the true fraternal, egalitarian values of Christianity which the priests had abandoned. There are elements of truth in this, but it is not the whole story. What it omits is any real reference to evidence for 'dechristianization'. Agulhon cites examples of artisan and peasant anger at refusal of Legitimist clergy to bury Republicans or free-thinkers in Provence (Agulhon 1982). There was clear popular sympathy for Voltairean Republican lawyers who had, for example, defended local communal rights cases in court. Equally one could argue that responses to the Marian miracle cult – promoted by the clergy as a substitute for dubious local saints and local 'superstitious' rituals which were being purged – often include

mockery from small-town artisans which it would be more accurate to categorize as a form of vulgar Voltairean scepticism than of Berenson's popular Christianity.

Analysis of urban popular religious attitudes remains difficult. Such evidence as we have – statistical or qualitative – could be interpreted either as simply implying worker alienation from the existing official Church and its clergy or as proof of growing dechristianization. The paternalist Catholic, Le Play, described the population of Paris as the most irreligious in Europe. His detailed social observations unearthed a whole gallery of Parisian workers – a Gentilly shawl maker, a Picpus forge-worker, a left-bank carpenter – who displayed a 'hateful hostility' to Catholicism. Mass attendance was below 2 per cent in many workers' *quartiers*. The delay between the birth and baptism, taken by religious sociologists as a useful indicator of popular attitudes to Catholicism, was lengthening in Marseilles – a city which hitherto had a reputation for Catholic populism. Many city couples lived in *concubinage*, unresponsive to the efforts of Catholic organizations to persuade them to regularize their unions through marriage. There was much resentment, too, at the level of fees charged for rites of passage, and bitterness that escalating funeral charges denied the poor a proper burial. Clergy lamented that *compagnons* were more devoted to the trinity of their building trade ('compass – spirit level – trowel') than to that of the Church. First Communion for young male workers was often a rite of passage into adulthood – after which they never again entered a church. Male practice of birth control via coitus interruptus was combated in vain by the clergy. 'Women are the only consolation of the Church' complained the Bishop of Chartres.

The Significance of Proudhon

No analysis of the relationship between the values of cooperative socialism and those of religion can omit to discuss Proudhon – even if it remains as difficult to assess the 'real' meaning of the apparently paradoxical and contradictory ideas of this quirky, idiosyncratic man as it is to assess his impact on the embryonic labour movement. Berenson interprets Proudhon's lifelong obsession with the scriptures and morality as meaning that he, too, should be located within the framework of Christian socialism. However, of all the associationists, Proudhon was the most virulently hostile to the 'religiosity' of the 1840s (Haubtmann 1969).

Proudhon has claims to be an authentic 'artisan-intellectual'. His father was a cooper and tavern-keeper. His mother, a stauncher character, was of peasant origins and, although a Catholic, passed on to her son a robust anti-feudal radicalism stemming from her family's long-standing defence of communal rights in Franche-Comté. Proudhon's experience as a scholarship pupil at Besançon college did more to sharpen his sense of class identity than to bourgeoisify him. Humiliated by the contrast between himself and middle-class fellow pupils, he later claimed that his schooling taught him 'poverty is not a crime – it is worse'. He subsequently trained as a journeyman printer in Paris, a city which he came to loathe with puritanical disgust, made an unsuccessful effort to set up his own print shop and then worked for a coal company in Lyon. Meanwhile, his own reflections on society, combined with his voracious, unsystematic reading, led him to churn out

a stream of articles pamphlets and books – often meandering in style and apparently contradictory in their ideas. Although historians have sometimes spoken of 'Proudhonist' artisans, Proudhon was really too idiosyncratic to produce disciples. He revelled in paradox, in juxtaposed contradictions. 'The truth', he claimed, 'appears in fragments from different angles.' His *What is Property?* (1840) made him an ogre to conservatives because of his epigrammatic answer that 'property is theft'. Yet he delighted in affirming that he actually was a believer in small property, that he was less revolutionary than the bourgeoisie feared, that he sought only a 'fair capitalism' – an alliance of 'labouring bourgeoisie and workers' in which the interests of intermediate classes could be satisfied without violent upheaval, terror or communism. Asked if he was a socialist he replied that, since his concern was to establish a people's bank to provide credit for cooperatives, he was really a 'financier'! Much of his writing is moralistic, concerned with the values that hold society together – as concerned, indeed, as any Le Playist Catholic with the family and the authority of the paterfamilias as the bedrock of the social order.

A selective reading of Proudhon can make him appear all things to all men. At the very time that conservatives were coming to view him as the epitome of revolution, Marx began to denounce him as the ideological voice of the doomed, objectively reactionary, 'petty-bougeoisie', seeking in mutualism a 'utopian' means to avoid harsh realities of industrial capitalism and class conflict. Moss, citing Proudhon's distrust of strikes and concern for petty property, has dismissed 'Proudhonism' as of little relevance to the mass of journeymen. Self-help via mutualist credit banks has been interpreted by some historians as essentially a new-liberal doctrine – and reformist Republicans in the 1870s, eager to promote a pragmatic, non-collectivist, labour movement, emphasized this interpretation of Proudhon's thinking.

Conversely others have seen in his mistrust of electoral politics and his concern for federalist decentralization evidence of his 'anarchist' or proto-syndicalist credentials. The French right, in time, found in Proudhon an ally. Had not Proudhon clashed with the German-Jew Dr Marx? Was not his distaste for parasitic high finance and usury sometimes expressed in anti-semitic rhetoric? Proudhon's concern for craft values, his distaste for cities and modern industry, his obsession with patriarchal family values and his virulent anti-feminism were to make him a cult figure for some on the extreme right in the 1900s and under Vichy. Similarly Catholic historians have professed to discern behind his ostensible 'anti-theism' a profound interest in Christianity (Hoffman 1972).

Given this plethora of apparently contradictory 'readings' of Proudhon and the oblique nature of his contact with and influence on the 'real' labour movement, how much validity is there in the claim of those who still regard him as important 'associationist' socialist? Was he 'representative' in his capacity to articulate the complexities of the artisanal world, to express workshop experiences and perceptions in categories and slogans which stimulated workers' consciousness? The relationship between such a 'theorist' and workers' developing awareness cannot be grasped either by writing linear intellectual histories of socialist ideas, nor by an approach which assumes that associationist socialism somehow grew spontaneously from lived workshop realities. As M. Fitzpatrick argues, a dialectical

approach to ideology, experience and consciousness would suggest that it is misleading to regard Proudhon either as a 'motor' of the early labour movement or as a mere reflective mirror of spontaneously generated worker attitudes (Fitzpatrick 1985).

Proudhon's distinctiveness stemmed in part from his scepticism about the value of 'politics' – universal suffrage, elections, political revolutions. Unlike many of his radical contemporaries he was critical of the Jacobin legacy. He questioned the relevance of the political change for social reform. Politics was 'mystification', he claimed, 'political reform will be the *effect* not the means of social reform'. He rarely engaged in anti-Orleanist polemics, doubted if the advent of universal suffrage or a democratic Republic would improve workers' situation, was suspicious of state support for cooperatives. More fundamentally, he was not an optimist about human nature or about workers' capacities. He queried whether social ills were simply the product of an unjust system. He dared suggest that 'original sin' was a useful concept which served to warn 'utopian' reformers that human nature was imperfect, human society not perfectible – for 'Salvation is not in man'. Many workers remained 'incapable as yet of sound judgements as to what is good for them.' Hence Proudhon's concern with both technical and moral education – even if, in the last resort, this could never eradicate selfishness.

Proudhon, to some extent, fits Berenson's thesis. He was obsessed by religion, teaching himself Hebrew in order to be equipped to polemicize with bishops. Yet he remained a hostile critic of the social-Christian wing of the associationist movement: 'Fallen into the hands of dreamers, gastrophers, tubthumpers . . . socialism has become sentimental, evangelical, theocratic. It has become everything that the reactionary would desire it to be for its profit and our shame.' Sadly 'a thick fog of religiosity presses today on the heads of all reformers'. In his teenage years he had been appalled by the missions' use of revivalism to whip up popular devotion to the Bourbons. As a printer he helped to publish both religious writings and editions of Voltaire. Briefly he flirted with the idea that a reformed Christianity might serve as a social cement for a more just social order and that the gospels themselves were not to blame for the 'infidelity of Catholicism to Christ's precepts'. But from the insistence that 'to restore religion it is necessary to condemn the Church', he moved to the view that the social revolution's concern with justice was incompatible with Christianity's obsession with charity. Before 1848 he had moved to a virulent anti-theism closer to Blanqui than to associationist 'social Christians'. For 'God is stupidity, cowardice, hypocrisy and falsehood, tyranny and poverty. For as long as men bow before altars, mankind will remain damned – a slave of Kings and Priests.' Catholic journalist Veuillot urged the arrest of the author of this 'frenzy of insults and blasphemies'.

But Proudhon remained an austere moralist, obsessed with the need for *virtu* as the foundation for a just society. The Jacobins had used Republican fêtes to sacrilize the notion of a Republic of Virtue. Proudhon looked to the moralizing value of skilled work as a basis for a Republic of petty-producers (Vincent 1984).

Proudhon was simultaneously part of the broad associationist movement and yet atypical in his obstinate refusal to contemplate a role for 'politics' or the state. He gave priority to autonomous worker activity. Centralism, he insisted, 'is death'. He

was aware, however, that his model of voluntary, autonomous producers' cooperatives might be inappropriate for coalmining or the railways and that in such large-scale 'modern' sectors a degree of state involvement and planning might be necessary. But he hoped to see industrial democracy and worker co-ownership even there. In the craft and peasant sectors he envisaged a voluntary mutualism of small producers, owning their workshops or farms but pooling their resources. P. Ansart questions the relevance of Proudhon's ideas to the peasantry but recent research has emphasized the real appeal of associationism to rural cash-crop petty-producers in the 1840s. One of the earliest successful cooperatives was amongst cheese producers in Proudhon's native Jura (Ansart 1970).

Proudhon sought a via media between individualism and collectivism, seeing diversity and pluralism and a degree of competition as healthy – provided small men were given the means to compete through access to credit. Diversity was a guarantee of a free anarchist society – for, as De Gaulle was later to remark, how could one have strong central government in a society with hundreds of varieties of cheese? The unfettered competition of laissez-faire remained an evil since it stimulated selfishness and 'in the name of liberty made men act towards each other like greedy wolves'. Whilst accepting that an exchange economy involved some specialization, he denounced the division of labour which reduced workers to repetitive tasks and brutalized them – and society. Skilled work alone gave men the dignity which was the foundation of morality. He doubted that technological 'progress' could satisfy authentic human needs. His authentic 'radicalism' lay, therefore, in a staunch refusal to view the factory as inevitable. His 'property is theft' was a categorical rejection of industrial capitalism which perpetrated a 'theft' from the skilled worker and which threatened to degrade him into a submissive 'hand'. Proudhon's conciliatory attitude to some strata of the middle class did not extend to large merchant-capitalists or industrialists. A 'fair capitalism' of small producers exchanging goods whose 'value' would reflect not 'supply and demand' but the time and skill expended in their production would, he hoped, satisfy craftsmen, peasants and the 'productive' middle class.

Undoubtedly, Proudhon made remarks suggesting that he might be a gradualist. 'I would rather' he insisted, 'ban property little by little than give it renewed strength through a St Bartholomew's Day of property owners'. However it might be unwise to judge the 'Proudhonism' of the 1840s by reference to its espousal by a craft elite in the 1860s. Marx did, of course, dismiss Proudhon's ideas as 'petty bourgeois' before 1848. Yet one could argue that in the 1840s it still appeared possible to thwart the triumph of industrial capitalism by an associationism which could save the threatened independence of craftsmen and rescue journeymen from the wage system. Ansart is correct to insist that Proudhon's early ideology must be 'located' in this time, place and class. It is simply misleading to accept Marx's categorization of pre-factory artisans as 'petty-bourgeois' – a term which implicitly conjures up images of selfish, reactionary, individualistic, Granthamite small grocers. Proudhon's ideology 'reflects' a society where alongside a growing industrial-capitalist mode of production, earlier modes of production were still vigorous. After 1830 masters and journeymen working for merchant-capitalists came to call themselves 'proletarian' – and yet struggled to organize a labour movement which

attempted to prevent 'workers' like themselves being forced down into the factory proletariat. Proudhonism, at least before the Second Empire, was the 'superstructural' ideology not of a 'petty-bourgeoisie' but of that 'artisanate' which still produced nearly three-quarters of French non-agricultural goods and which in absolute – though not relative – terms may still have been expanding. Such workers still felt that the triumph of industrial capitalism was not yet inevitable. Proudhonism was directed to the needs and perceptions of masters and journeymen who worked alongside each other, whose only 'capital' was their workshops, tools and knowhow. For them associationism did not appear a utopian chimera but a realistic strategy.

Ansart argues that Proudhon's ideas must be understood in the light of his stay in Lyon where he met *canut* leaders and was impressed by the network of mutual aid societies and cooperatives which had already 10,000 members. Lyon workers – masters and journeymen – appeared to be developing mutualism from their own experiences, not by imbibing outside 'theories'. Proudhon applauded action by, not for, the people. 'Proudhonism' could even be viewed as the articulation of *canut* experience and practice into a doctrine, for silkweaver mutualism appeared to be voluntary, sociable, non-hierarchical. It offered Proudhon a working model of reciprocal mutual exchange between independent producers. It had begun in the 1820s, pre-dating Buchez's writings. Its initial rules had banned 'political' discussions – although experience of Orleanist repression in 1831–4 had converted many weavers to Republicanism.

Ansart concludes that any attempt to 'explain' Proudhon by citing the influence on him of the thought of Montesquieu, Rousseau, Godwin, or Hegel is simply inadequate. Certainly his concern for pluralist diversity echoed liberal checks-and-balances discourse. Similarly, his religious writings involve a pointed attack on the theocratic ideas of De Bonald and his suspicion of the bourgeois radicals of *La Réforme*, even when they spouted associationist rhetoric, stemmed from his distaste for Jacobin statist ideology. But his fierce polemics are only fully understood if one accepts that he shared the cultural world of the *canuts*. His concern was with workers dignity and independence. Unlike Blanc he did not emphasize the material poverty of workers, nor did he share dreams of material plenty offered by Saint Simonians or Cabet. He was less concerned that workers should be materially well off than that they should be undeferential. Many radicals were understandably bewildered by his taste for paradox, his suspicion of 'politics' and of a 'progessive' state. His attitude to women – though it echoes the alarm felt by male artisans at female 'dilution' of their trades – was uncompromisingly traditionalist. Asserting the importance of the stable patriarchal family as the basis of any social order, he scathingly denounced those on the left who advocated free love, birth control, tolerance for homosexuals. Indeed his attacks on Christian-socialism may have been prompted, in part, by his belief that Lammenais was a homosexual pederast! Yet for his assertion of the dignity of skilled work and his hatred of all state, Church and capitalist authority, he still deserves at least two cheers.

ASSOCIATIONISM, NEO-CORPORATISM AND THE LANGUAGE OF LABOUR

According to W. Sewell the associationist movement was able to root itself in worker culture because it could build on trade solidarities of the ancien regime *corps de métier* carried into the post-Revolution industrial world by the *compagnonnages* (Sewell 1980). The legal ban imposed on them in 1791 (see above) had failed to prevent the survival of their institutions, rituals, myths, solidarities and rhetoric. In a typically disingenuous review of Sewell's work Furet, the doyen of Annaliste revisionism, argued that the author had shown that here, as in so much else, the Revolution had not signalled a break in the continuities of French history. Needless to say this is not Sewell's argument. What he is claiming is that, faced with a world of laissez-faire capitalism, the *compagnonnages* responded flexibly and creatively to modernize themselves by rejecting internal hierarchies and internecine violence. In doing so, they succeeded in making a significant step from narrow craft corporatism towards wider class unity. Hence they could call for a 'grand association' of all trades, an end to 'mutual insults and violence'. The 'resistance societies' of the July Monarchy, which acted as embryonic trade-unions, are interpreted as drawing heavily from psychological and organizational solidarities nurtured by the *compagnonnages*. By placing less emphasis than before on itinerant 'tramping' artisans and arcane rituals these contributed to the growth of mutual aid societies which recruited sedentary workers. The culmination of these developments Sewell locates in the 'craft parliament' of the Luxembourg Commission during the Revolution of 1848 in which Parisian artisans mobilized both under their craft banners and as self-conscious members of the wider working class.

Sewell's thesis is clearly influenced by the new left Marxism of the 1960s. It shares with E. P. Thompson and Agulhon a concern to show how artisans – and peasants – could respond to capitalist threats by imaginative adaption of elements of their 'traditional' culture. As Kaplow comments, such an approach asserts the creative role of human beings in the process of class formation, the varied heritage available for workers to tap as they faced new types of exploitation (Kaplow 1984). The 'working class' is thus viewed as capable of 'making itself' by utilizing the resources of a web of traditions, practices and values from its past. This is a clear rejection of the approach, still current in the writing of East German historian Holzapfel, which tries to correlate the emergence of class consciousness with the factory (Holzapfel 1986).

How, according to Sewell, did old corporatism metamorphose into new class identity? The corporative world was based on local trade monopolies, quality controls, apprenticeship, control of entry to the trade and guild, rights to discipline members. Masters and journeymen alike accepted such controls as 'for the good of the trade'. Masters did not act as capitalist entrepreneurs, journeymen did not seek the freedom to work anywhere. Despite inevitable tensions and journeymen's strikes, the 'moral solidarity' of the craft community was cemented by fêtes, rituals and mutual aid. This world was shaken by a Revolution which outlawed the guilds and trade collectivities, proclaimed individual property rights, market liberties and the rights of man. In the ensuing confusion some masters became entrepreneurs,

some journeymen exploited the new 'freedom' of the labour market. But the *compagnonnages* survived – as we have seen – as illegal but semi-tolerated journeymen's organizations which could organize strikes, but whose wider effectiveness was nullified by internecine feuding and by limited aspirations and narrow horizons. Hence they failed to question property rights or the wage system.

The year 1830 marked a new watershed. For the new bourgeois revolution re-emphasized the language of citizens' rights, popular sovereignty, and social contract and denounced the aristocracy as idle and parasitic. Workers now learned to manipulate and adapt this discourse for their own purposes. The bourgeoisie made much of the 'rights of property' – yet were prepared to steal the craftsman's 'property' – i.e. his job – from him. Hence typographer Leroux could insist, 'that we accept property rights – but we wish to extend them to cover wages. We accept the liberty of the rich – only we wish to extend it to cover the rest of us.' Above all, Sewell claims, *compagnonnage* spokesmen learned to justify their support for workers' associations in the language of liberal political discourse. In a 'free' society individuals had the right to associate. Hence some collective regulation of a trade could become compatible with individuals' free choice. At the same time artisans remained at heart moral collectivists, emphasizing 'association' as a moral community, asserting the contribution of labour to the public welfare.

Hence the corporate idiom had elements of continuity and of innovation. Neologisms like 'association' were absorbed into it. Yet the old language of *corps de métier* was still used. A man with an *état* had a fixed trade, was not a mere labourer. This terminology was, as R. Gossez emphasizes, current in the revolutionary spring of 1848 when one anonymous placard read, 'Let all workers earn at least 3 francs a day, in particular the *hommes de peine* [labourers] – those who have the good fortune to have an *état* should receive more. Otherwise there'll be gunfire!' (Gossez 1967).

Sewell's thesis has not gone unchallenged. It has been argued, for example, that far from acting as a vehicle for the transmission of old solidarities to the labour movement, *compagnonnages* remained a force for craft sectionalism and an 'archaic' impediment to a new working-class consciousness (Judt 1986). Indeed Sewell's own work on Marseilles suggests that stevedores, the only group of workers in the city to retain strong neo-corporatist organization, were a bastion of cultural traditionalism and political conservatism (Sewell 1974). Carpenters conducted six major strikes between 1822 and 1845, during which their *compagnonnage* solidarities were clearly important. Yet of all craft-workers, carpenters remained the most resistant to wider class solidarities and the least involved in political radicalism or associationism.

Could one thus argue that there is a negative correlation between the persistence of corporatist values and involvement in class politics? Certainly in their unreconstructed form the *compagnonnages* were deeply divisive. Moreau's *De la Réforme des Abus des Compagnonnages* (1840) is an eloquent catalogue of their defects (Faure and Rancière 1976). Its author had led a 'revolt' of young locksmiths in Toulon against older *compagnons* who had tried to exclude them from their canteen. Their protest was triggered by the mood of 1830 when 'the banner of liberty was flying' as Moreau commented. In 1832 he had set up a breakaway organization which

emphasized the need for equality between and within trades. He advocated democratic elections for officials, and viewed much *compagnonnage* ritual as irrelevant or positively harmful or – as with the 'mysterious ceremonies' of the Devoirs – absurd. The legends of the latter's origins in the Temple of Solomon were 'grotesque fables'.

The rivalries between Devoirs produced 'savage and immoral wars'. Another would-be reformer, forge worker Gosset, was similarly critical. Hierarchy within and between trades led to petty tyrannies and alienated young workers. Wearing the 'colours' of the Devoir and carrying staves were open invitations to fratricidal violence which served to obscure any realization that 'we [workers] are all brothers'. The *conduite*, the custom whereby the tramping journeyman about to leave for another town was accompanied on a protracted café crawl, was a stupid waste of money. Fines imposed on those who forgot to call their fellows by their correct sobriquet (nickname) were puerile. The way forward had to be by drawing in marginal trades (shoemakers; bakers), broadening recruitment to sedentary, married man, ceasing to discriminate against the young who were bemused by archaic rituals and often had wider political and class loyalties.

Such reformers were as unsuccessful in the 1830s to 1840s as those who had organized the abortive craft congress in Bordeaux in 1821. Rivalries and *rixes* were more than merely accidental features of *compagnonnage* culture. As A. Faure observes, they reflected genuine threats to skilled workers' control of the labour market (Perdiguier 1976). Employers seeking to cut wage costs in a period of falling profits could play off rival Devoirs against each other. In 1842 in Sens (Yonne) *gavots* took jobs usually monopolized by their rivals from the *devoirant* Devoir. Perdiguier, the most celebrated advocate of a reform, admitted that many trades were facing 'degeneration'. His own furniture craft was witnessing Fauboug St Antoine artisans reduced to assembling pre-made tables. Flora Tristan observed that the 'flooding' of some occupations by rural migration meant that 'Campagnonnage is being destroyed by lack of work.' The construction industry, the key *compagnonnage* bastion, faced the problem of the collapse of work practices as subcontractors bid against each other to offer building entrepreneurs cheaper labour and earlier completion dates. All this, Perdiguier lamented, 'transforms workers into machines'. By 1846 he complained that his own trade now had five rival societies. Often older *compagnons* sought, as among Bordeaux locksmiths, to exclude young *aspirants* from scarce jobs. '*Compagnons* made war on each other – they made it against men who join the *Compagnonnages*, and against those who did not wish to join at all' (Perdiguier 1976).

Perdiguier became a cult figure in the 1840s amongst progressive intellectuals like George Sand. He had settled in the faubourg St Antoine after completing his *Tour de France*. He aspired to become a small furniture master but his career in the trade was a chapter of disasters, and he spent most of his time doing low-quality 'sweated' work (Rancière 1983). Ostensibly he sought to modernize the *Compagnonnages*, yet his fascination with their arcane rituals may explain his failure to do so. Unlike Moreau he approved of the 'colours' and the *cannes* as appealing to workers' emotions. He praised the role of the *rouleur* – the *compagnon* whose task it was to 'present' the journeyman to his new employer or to ensure that all

debts were settled before he moved on to his next town. Perdiguier's concern was more with a functioning industrial relations system of 'good' employers and 'good' workers than to question the wage system or craft sectionalism: 'everyone knows that the *corps de métier* is independent and that nothing can change that state of affairs'.

Perdiguier did share Proudhon's concern with the *dignity* of skilled labour, attacking the *savants* who ignored this. 'Do not denigrate us, do not strip us of our thoughts, do not contest our legitimate possession of our capital – knowhow, which is ours and which we transmit from generation to generation without fuss'. He spent his spare time training young woodworkers – and pointed to Britain as the grim warning of the disasters befalling a working class stripped of its skills. He perceived London as a Dickensian nightmare. Moreau, too, lamented the 'deplorable condition of English workers'. Without the *Tour de France* to hone their skills French workers, too, would be brutalized.

There is little in Perdiguier's discourse of any appeal to factory or women workers. But after 1840 he toured France preaching his message of the need for a merger between rival Devoirs. Within the *compagnonnages* the 'rich' should aid the 'poor' like brothers. Proudhon found much of this sentimental nonsense. Nevertheless, Perdiguier's obsession with knowhow and its transmission has some claim to prefigure the concerns of the syndicalist Bourse du Travail of the 1890s. In the intervening decades many worker militants valued the 'tramping' tradition. Under the Second Empire Paris metal-workers moved frequently from workshop to workshop, not merely to escape subordination to any one employer but to broaden their skills, and J. B. Dumay quit the company town of Le Creusot, where he felt that management were trying to mould him into a docile 'worker-machine', in order to 'do what they called the *Tour de France*' (Dumay 1976).

But overall it is difficult to share Coornaert's positive assessment of the contribution of *compagnonnages* to the emerging labour movement. They showed little of the associationist concern with worker control of production. Continuing *rixes* were a symptom of crumbling hierarchical world. Perdiguier did become a Republican deputy in 1848 and had always urged his fellows 'be *compagnons* – but also be citizens and be men!' But in the Second Republic radical workers treated *compagnonnage* as an archaic irrelevance – and after the 1851 coup d'etat it suffered the indignity of being patronized as a harmless organization by the authoritarian Bonapartist regime which sent notables to flatter it with banquet speeches and gold medals.

Perdiguier himself was reduced to seeking a solution to the degradation of a demoralized, rudderless working class in appeals for paternalist assistance. 'Fathers, Mothers, philanthropists, men of goodwill, of all conditions, help us!' Thereafter *compagnonnage* customs were mainly celebrated by conservatives who contrasted this quaint, picturesque, French tradition with the nasty modern realities of proletarian syndicalism or Marxism. Confronted with the threat of a general strike in 1908 prime minister Clemenceau asked, 'what has happened to the *Compagnons*?' Vichy lauded them as carriers of a native tradition of Catholic ritual, class conciliation and quality workmanship. This sad decline has now culminated in the celebration of them by the pseudo-folkloric heritage industry in which they

have been reduced to colourful characters in the never-never land idyll of *la vieille France* – a fate foreshadowed already in their representation in the novels of George Sand.

The most fundamental challenge to the 'myth' of the radical artisan has come from the awkward questions posed by J. Rancière, who subjects the commonplaces of recent labour historiography to close scrutiny (Rancière 1983). 'We must be systematically cautious', he insists, 'whenever we wish to establish links between professional situations, militant practices and ideological statements'. Rancière accepts that tailors and shoemakers were disproportionately active in associationist and strike activity. But can one by the 1840s describe them as craft-proud artisans? Were they not now members of 'vile' trades which were being flooded by migrants and female labour? Their jobs often involved working longer hours, doing repetitive tasks and producing inferior-quality goods. It was, Rancière suggests, precisely because they lacked a strong neo-corporatist tradition that they could turn to political militancy which emphasized proletarian unity. By espousing Cabetism or the 'Social and Democratic Republic' they sought solutions external to their specific trade. Shoe-maker Efrahem called for a united workers' movement embracing all trades. 'Let us silence these ridiculous jealousies between *corps d'états* and dangerous craft rivalries. Let us stifle our hatreds. Let us replace old usages which have become powerless today to protect us – dangerous even, since they keep us divided.' Joint committees of workers from different trades should be set up to provide the workers' movement with a 'thinking head'.

Rancière suggests that the attitude of 'artisan' militants to their trades was frequently ambivalent. Even Perdiguier, the model *compagnon*, in fact spent years making cheap tables for declining piecerates. Could not one thus interpret his career in the 1840's as a writer and as a *compagnonnage* propagandist as, in part, an attempt to escape the harsh realities of his trade? Furthermore, Rancière insists, too many historians have sought to identify militants with particular trades by 'freezing' their careers at a particular moment – and then by interpreting their ideologies and actions as emerging from this craft identity. Voinier, the St Simonian 'haberdasher', in fact spent years as a wineseller, then as a clerk. Troncin was a tailor – yet took up the trade reluctantly in a moment of family crisis. His real concern is with dignity, education, equality – not with tailoring. Delas, another tailor, was described by a fellow militant as 'a weak compagnon, working little and poorly – as a result earning little and barely subsisting, having no concern for his (professional) future. If one asked him about his situation, he replied, "who cares? This won't last. Do you think I'm the sort to spend my life sewing petit point?" '

One could also argue that recent historiography has understated persistent divisions within the 'artisan' world between masters and journeymen. There were real frictions even amongst the Lyon *canuts*, despite the success of the masters in building a united front. As historians of the world of work of the ancien regime have emphasized, the unity of the old corporate world had been endlessly disrupted by journeymen's strikes against guild masters – even if few went to the length of massacring their masters' cats! *Sans-culotte* rhetoric which emphasized the unity of petty-producers against the *gros* could be viewed as political myth making rather than reality – a vocabulary designed to create political unity in the early 1790s

amongst groups with a history of endemic recent conflict. Prud'hommes records bear witness to the frequency of conflict between journeymen and masters. There were 30 strikes by journeymen tailors against Paris bespoke masters in the 1830s, as the latter cut rates to meet competition (Johnson 1978). Grignon, a militant journeyman, denounced the abuse of journeymen by masters: 'Are we their niggers? Their words are shameful. In itself that justifies our determination.' On the eve of 1848 some French masters were, like their German counterparts, urging a return of the guilds in order to reassert their control over journeymen and in 1848 prefects encouraged the formation of 'artisan societies' of masters and shopkeepers as a counterweight against worker militancy.

While Marx's categorization of these strata as 'petty-bourgeois' is potentially misleading, it remains true that in an economy where the 'artisan' sector was still growing in absolute terms, some successful masters could be so defined – 'objectively' and 'subjectively'. Their identity as a class 'in' and 'for' itself was fluid and ambivalent. Masters in some trades and some towns allied with journeymen and were the mainstay of popular radical politics. Yet they could be moderate Republicans in 1848 or, later in the century, the nucleus of the populist politics of the anti-semitic, xenophobic radical right.

Rancière urges historians to learn to 'decode' the discourse about artisans which was, he claims, not simply produced by working craftsmen themselves. The texts faced by the historian are often part of a dialogue between self-educated 'worker-writers' and radical intellectuals. Often this was a dialogue of the deaf, in which the two 'talked past' each other. The 'myth' of the craft-proud artisan may have been promulgated above all by intellectuals. In pointed contrast, workers themselves often portrayed workshop life as one of drudgery, in which their human qualities were being wasted. Their concerns were for access to the world of education and dignity. This was not apolitical escapism but, on the contrary, deeply subversive of a bourgeois social order which sought to limit workers' horizons and in which even the primary schools established under the 1833 Guizot Act were designed to mould workers' children to accept a lifetime of manual toil: 'With the introduction of aesthetic sentiments into the working-class universe the very foundations of the whole social order were placed in question', Rancière claims.

Hence the discourse 'about' the 'artisan' needs careful contextual reading. It may not be what it seems. Workers did not need contact with intellectuals to tell them that they were exploited: their own experiences taught them that. What it did was provide wider visions of escape from the workshop – of emancipation, love, education. Of course radical intellectuals were not the only ones to talk of the dignity of skilled labour itself. Lyon *canuts* or faubourg St Antoine cabinet makers also emphasized the need to preserve the 'artistry' which produced quality products. Possibly Rancière overstates his case. Yet there is some plausibility in his claim that when Proudhon or Corbon preached of dignity through manual labour – juxtaposing this with attacks on idle elites – they were seeking to create an ideology about artisan labour to serve as the ethos of the labour movement, whilst often aware that associationism required of real workers a degree of self-control and self-denial of which few might be capable.

Rancière's final point, echoed by Judt, is that the peculiarities of French labour

stem more from the unique revolutionary experiences of 1789–1830 than from the work experiences and preoccupations of artisans, however prominent these may have been in the militancy of the Orleanist period. In 1849 the Lyon tailors wrote in support of their Parisian colleagues:

> You are as aware as we are of the catastrophe besetting our industry and feel its evil effects. It was amongst you that first saw the light of day those soulless speculators who view nothing in life save money . . . who have abnegated all sentiments of humanity, who push us towards a concentration of commerce – in other words a total denial of the motto [Liberty, Equality, Fraternity] which adorns our public buildings.

They denounced 'competition which makes us strangers to the essence of our own being'. (Liebmann 1981).

A proponent of the radical artisan thesis might point to the tailors' concern at the degradation of their craft as evidence against Rancière's claim that tailors no longer regarded themselves as craftsmen. However one could read the text to emphasize its political awareness, its emphasis on the glaring discrepancy between the bourgeoisie's own '1789' ideals and the realities of French society. Rancière and Judt argue against a reductionism which assumes that workers' consciousness derives only, or even principally, from the workplace. Fascinated by the culture of work, historians have neglected workers' wider horizons and aspirations. The 'worker humanism' of these years grew from workers' determination to be fully fledged citizens in post-Revolution society. Activists *were* often craftsmen. But they sought rights as men – even if often ignoring those of women. They wanted the vote, dignity, the right to wear decent clothes, education and respect. They expressed interest in foreign policy – by denouncing in Jacobin-patriotic terms Guizot's betrayal of Europe's oppressed peoples, by his subservience to Metternich and London. In face of bourgeois tirades about labouring and dangerous classes, 'the barbarians of our cities' or of the reports of experts like Villermé on slum squalor and degradation, they emphasized their capacity to be dignified and sober citizens. Martin Nadaud's autobiography tells of his pride when he, an ill-educated building worker in dirty work-clothes, was complimented on his reading ability and intellectual interest by a bourgeois Republican who saw him reading a newspaper in a *cabinet de lecture* and talked to him as an equal (Nadaud 1976). One should beware of interpreting this incident as proof that Nadaud's concern with literacy and with receiving respect from an educated bourgeois means that he was on the way to accepting bourgeois values or petty-bourgeois aspirations. It could be viewed as a struggle to reject bourgeois stereotyping of workers, a refusal to be 'named' as 'savages' by the elites. It was a battle for the appropriation of words – a battle in which worker militants were neither subordinate to dominant bourgeois ideology nor involved in any simple juxtaposition of 'proletarian' values and 'bourgeois' values. In the 1833 tailors' strike Grignon insisted, 'we are not *révoltés*. What we demand is just and reasonable. We take public opinion as our witness. It is not favours we are asking for, it is our rights and nothing but our rights, (Faure and Rancière 1976).

The author of the pamphlet, *La Fraternité de 1845* claimed that 'it is not just appetites which are agitating, it is better than that. It is the people's intelligence

which is making its debut in the social domain and which is raising itself to the conception of liberty, equality and fraternity'. Rouen textile worker C. Noiret indignantly denied that workers' aspirations could or should be confined to the world of work. 'Work, they tell us, stay in your workshop. Politics is not your concern. You haven't the time to bother with it. Moreover, you don't know anything about it. Discussion of laws will be above your limited intelligence.'

Noiret insisted that workers' instincts made them sense what was beneficial for society. Confined to the workshop for six days or more per week 'we wish to breath fresh air, to see daylight, to open our eyes to the light'. To say that workers had no interest in politics was to say that they were uninterested in life itself. Associationism involved more than worker aspirations to job control. It was a prerequisite to their independence as citizens. For if workers were obliged to work for factory owners 'a good number of us would be forced to vote according to our employers' suggestions' (Faure and Rancière 1976; Chaline 1986).

3

Beyond the Artisanate

FACTORY TEXTILE-WORKERS

Noiret himself worked in the Rouen cotton mills. His fear that in a factory industry dominated by capitalist entrepreneurs deference would lead workers into passive submission coincides with the assessment of much recent labour historiography on factory textile-workers. This emphasizes and seeks to explain their lack of class consciousness and organization. Aguet's study of the BB18 dossiers in the Archives Nationales suggested that under 10 per cent of the 1,000 or so strikes of the Orleanist period occurred in 'non-artisanal' sectors (Aguet 1954; Stearns 1965). Factory textile towns attracted the attention of a new breed of 'expert' bourgeois social observer (Villermé, Buret, A. Blanqui) whose reports – widely read by contemporaries – portrayed, with disgust and disquiet, a world of misery and deteriorating moral values. Factory cities were portrayed as breeding grounds for a brutalized race of underfed, undersized, deformed savages who posed a threat to French civilization. Yet they rarely suggested that such workers posed an immediate political threat.

Lille was a miniature Manchester. Its 15,000 cotton workers were employed in 34 large mills, its 14,000 linen and tweed workers worked in smaller plants. If factory wages were marginally higher than those of rural outworkers, working and housing conditions were described as appalling. A work day of up to 15 hours and exhausting piecework schedules produced high accident rates. Dusty conditions in overheated, ill-ventilated mills generated bronchial diseases. Some workers inhabited cellars in the notorious Rue d'Etaques which were periodically flooded by sewage – and became a pilgrimage venue for a succession of concerned liberal and paternalist social observers (Lasserre 1952). Many of their subsequent reports, Reddy suggests, permutated a stock litany of phrases drawn from earlier reports not from direct observation (Reddy 1984). Newer worker housing in suburbs like Wazemmes was of marginally higher standard. Child and female labour dominated the factory textile sector. In some mills up to 30 per cent of the workforce was under 18. Medical experts lamented the physical consequences – quantified statistically in stunted growth, child mortality and percentages of conscripts deemed to be unfit for military service. To the delight of modern Annaliste historians, their proto-positivist ancestors of the 1840s engaged in impassioned statistical disputes

as to whether or not conscripts from factory towns were shorter or taller than their rural counterparts, or why those from Mulhouse were taller than those from textile towns in the North or Normandy (Heywood 1988). Barely 25 per cent of Lille children attended school, and overall literacy in the city was barely 10 per cent. Whereas in most regions urban literacy was much higher than rural in the Nord the reverse was the case (Furet and Ozouf 1977). Observers claimed to find factory workers intellectually inferior to city artisans. Amongst this demoralized class they saw evidence that family life was disintegrating. Alcoholism engendered family violence.

But there was little coherent industrial or political protest. Protest was drowned in bars rather than planned there. Apathetic fatalism was the norm. One worker told the social-Catholic notable Villeneuve-Bargemont: 'When we grow old hospital will receive us, or we will die, and everything will be over.' As late as the 1860s the liberal Jules Simon claimed that textile workers' wills bowed before 'the Supreme Trinity – the factory rules, the Boss, the machine'. Those seeking escape took refuge in drink, prostitution – or fled to Paris, the army or Algeria.

When marginal improvements in social conditions were occurring, these often appeared to stem from the paternalism of Protestant employers in Alsace or their Catholic counterparts in the Nord. Villermé attributed the 'passivity' of workers in the latter region to their origins in the Flemish Catholic countryside. Employers encouraged Catholic charitable organizations such as St Vincent de Paul or St Cyrille Régis which sought to persuade working-class couples to regularise domestic cohabitation by Christian marriage. Mgr Giraud of Cambrai, amongst the most outspoken of social-Catholic prelates, urged the elites to temper the harshness of laissez-faire dogmas with Christian paternalism.

Historians have accepted many of the explanations offered by contemporaries for the lack of militancy of textile workers. The noise of the mill and the supervision of foremen were not conducive to on-the-job discussion of grievances common in artisan workshops. Women workers, victims of the 'double-burden' of factory work and domestic chores, lacked time and energy for other activities. Their Catholic upbringing and the male prejudices of their fathers and husbands provided further obstacles. The rapid growth of textile towns such as Roubaix, whose population swelled from 8,100 to 34,000 in two decades, was not conducive to the existence of community solidarities such as those of the Croix-Rousse. Roubaix was, too, 'an America where each man could take his choice', a town where resourceful workers could aspire to become foremen. The absence of craft and corporate traditions amongst rural migrants who moved into the factories may have meant that they lacked the cultural resources for the development of mutual aid or resistance organizations. A. Blanqui contrasted the self-discipline shown by Lyon *canuts* in mutualist associations with the 'intemperance' of Nord cotton operatives. Low literacy rates limited the audience for radical literature. And the low skill levels required of much of the workforce meant that the rare industrial disputes – often 'defensive' strikes against wage cuts – could be broken easily by importing Belgian blacklegs in the Nord, or Swiss in Alsace. The few militants could be easily isolated and dismissed – whilst the *livret* facilitated blacklisting by other

employers. As ever, the state could be relied on to send troops to arrest troublemakers. In 1832, 304 were detained in Nord textile disputes.

Hence during the 1845–7 economic crisis, marked by high food prices and lay-offs, the textile *patronat* expressed surprised delight that their workers remained deaf to radical siren songs emanating from Paris. The Tourcoing Chamber of Commerce observed that 'this class remains . . . calm and resigned to submission to circumstances . . . until such time as factory production resumes normal activity'. The tough Rouen *patronat* appeared able with impunity to impose lay-offs and wage cuts and to refuse to negotiate with workers who requested the right to keep their own tally of production to avoid employer fraud. Sackings for 'insubordination' actually fell by 75 per cent between 1845 and 1847 (Demier 1982).

The severity of the crisis meant that some popular protest was inevitable. But it remained reassuringly 'archaic' – a few instances of Luddism, attacks on Belgian workers, the pillaging of a few bakeries in Lille. Of 82 textile strikes detailed by Aguet, only two major conflicts were in the Nord. One – the Lille strike of 1839 – was the only serious revolt against the wide spread practice of fraudulent employer measurement of piecework output. Most strikes in the factory textile sector remained 'defensive'.

Such generalizations require to be nuanced since the Nord's textile workforce was heterogeneous. Thousands of rural out-workers, growing some of their own food and living dispersed in a Catholic, notable-dominated countryside, posed few problems beyond the threat of food rioting in bad years. Within mills unskilled female and child workers were more 'passive' than spinners and wool-combers – who acquired their knowhow on the job after beginning as child bobbin-minders. They led some wage strikes. The potential base for more sophisticated industrial, even political, protest, lay in the small stratum of machine-makers, machine maintenance men and textile printers and carpetmakers. These were more literate, earned wages – up to 3.50 francs per day – sufficient to permit them to establish mutual aid societies and, because of their skill, were less vulnerable to victimization. By 1846–7 some were becoming receptive to radical propaganda.

The behaviour of woolworkers in Lodève (Hérault) suggests that it was not necessarily factory work per se but the newness of the workforce which could explain the quiescence of northern textile workers. Lodève, a town of 12,000 was the scene of sustained and organized militancy, largely because the transformation of the wool industry there dated from the 1770s (Johnson 1979). By the 1840s second- or third-generation mill workers had had the opportunity to develop solidarities and resistance strategies. In the last decades of the ancien regime the guild of master-weavers there had been defeated by merchants, who first moved production to the countryside, then back – by the early 1800s – to the town, this time in mills in which carding and spinning were mechanized rapidly and where cloth for Napoleon's army uniforms was produced. By the early 1820s Luddite activists forced the employers to promise that the advent of cropping machines would involve no redundancies or pay cuts. There were 12 major strikes before 1848. Local solidarities made blackleg recruitment difficult. During piecework disputes in 1831–4 and 1839–40 workers targeted mills with full order books, then

sought to generalize wage gains secured in these. The arrest of militants provoked mass walkouts. In 1845 there was a strike against new power looms.

Located in an area of the Midi where political conflicts in the 1790s had been particularly acute and where the peasantry were more volatile than that of Catholic Flanders, Lodève developed a vigorous politicized popular culture. The anniversary of the July Revolution was celebrated. Yet the very vitality of the labour movement may have hastened its demise. With their specialized market shrinking and northern competition a serious challenge, employers fought to establish the principle that 'it is necessary for the master to govern his workers'. Unable to achieve such managerial supremacy, the textile elite began to switch their investment into the wine industry.

Lodève was not unique. Other textile towns in the South – Bédarieux, Clermont, Carcassonne, Castres – experienced similar labour troubles. So, too, did such established centres as Vienne and Rheims, both Cabetist strongholds, where male handloom-weavers provided the nucleus of resistance to technological change after the spinners' rearguard actions had been defeated. In 1834 in Rheims the spinners had meetings in the woods outside the town, threatened to smash machinery and had been defeated only when the National Guard carried out arrests. Their song had clear radical overtones:

Tremble you timorous owners
To the worker his rights
Fear lest equality
Return to reign on earth
Oh, spinners on guard!

In a book by turns brilliant, provocative and infuriating, W. Reddy has offered a different 'reading' of the behaviour of northern textile workers (Reddy 1984). He queries characterization of them as uprooted rustics lost in a new environment. He questions acceptance at face value of the 'miserabilist' vision offered by Villermé of ill-paid, illiterate, unhealthy, brutalized proletarians seeking relief from the horrors of satanic mills and squalid homes in alcohol and personal violence, and of child and female labour wrecking family life. He queries orthodox labour history which interprets low levels of strike activity as proof of worker 'passivity'. These orthodox views fail to notice that this workforce was recruited from amongst former 'proto-industrial' outworkers. Once in the mill these continued to perceive themselves as independent producers who 'sold' their products to the capitalists whom they 'paid' for raw materials, light and heat. They acted as 'subcontractors', 'hiring' their own assistants, usually kin. Hence the proto-industrial family production unit functioned inside the mill. With splendid obstinacy they refused to regard themselves as 'hired hands', as waged proletarians selling their labour – despite their categorization as such by prefects and liberal economists. Reddy questions whether their industrial disputes should be viewed as 'strikes' at all. Their apparent failure to rally to the left in the 1840s was less a sign of their apathy or ignorance than of the failure of radicals to offer an ideology or programme which appeared relevant to their idiosyncratic problems – since these were as consistently misunderstood by the left as by bourgeois 'experts'.

According to Reddy there had been little 'entrepreneurship' in textiles in the late eighteenth century. Merchants put work out to the countryside, then collected the finished product. The emergence of industrial capitalism was gradual and uneven. As late as the 1820s Roubaix wool weavers owned their looms, worked in their own houses clustered round merchants' warehouses and 'sold' their products to the merchants. The period 1827–31 was the watershed. To meet the Depression, captalists accelerated the pace of mechanization in the Nord and Normandy – a process already well advanced in Alsace. To ensure maximum utilization of new plant machinery, employers introduced fines for poor timekeeping and banned talking and smoking in the mills: 'Complete silence must reign in the shop. In certain industries singing is tolerable, because it makes tiresome work easier to tolerate, but in spinning-mills . . . [its] role should be filled by the regular pace of the machines', claimed one Alsace mill owner.

It might be unwise to accept such rules entirely at face value, to adopt the fashionable grim pessimism of a Foucault who regards workers, 'criminals', 'lunatics', conscripts and school pupils as passive victims of inexorable processes of categorization and control perfected by the new 'total' institutions – factories, prisons, mental asylums, barracks and schools – of the post-Enlightenment industrial age. Factory regulations were sometimes lax, or simply ignored. N. Truquin in his autobiography recalls with affection his stay as an adolescent in an Amiens mill of the 1840s, whose workers indulged in jokes, games, songs and plays. He contrasted this with the cruel discipline imposed on him as apprentice to an artisan (Truquin 1977).

In August 1830 a violent labour conflict occurred on the outskirts of Rouen when 8,000 textile-workers walked out in protest against new bonus pay systems, factory rules and fines. The Orleanist prefect encouraged them to elect delegates to state their case, then had these arrested – an illustration, Reddy claims, of the uncertainty of the new regime about the correct rules of the industrial relations game. The army intervened when angry strikers then overran the local town hall. There were 60 arrests. The episode suggests two observations. The first is that the spinners resented the erosion of their independence, for 'one did not have to be a proud craftsman to want time for a break and a chat – merely to be alive and working' (Reddy). Secondly the dispute's timing indicates that factory-workers were not unaware of the contradictions between the Revolution's rhetoric of liberty and their own declining freedom in the workplace.

According to Reddy the realities of textile-worker culture were deformed by proto-positivist experts such as Villermé who acted 'like naturalists watching a strange species' (Courtheoux 1957). They assumed that they were dealing with individual economic actors selling their labour power in a 'free' market – in which excessive labour supply pushed wages down to subsistence levels. They also produced a moral critique of workers' culture, portraying brutalized creatures trapped in a downward spiral of poverty, alcohol, ignorance and family disintegration. But, Reddy enquires, do Villermé's wage statistics or assumptions about the 'free market' bear any relation to reality? And are his comments on workers' lifestyles 'scientific' – or mere bourgeois prejudice. Villermé drew up 'imaginary budgets' of textile-workers' income and expenditure which were 'grandiose

collections of indirect correlations which demonstrated nothing'. Would-be calculations of 'average daily wages' were doomed to failure. Seasonal and cyclical factors made the workday highly variable. Most workers were paid by the task, received different rates for different qualities of yarn. The 'needs' of working-class families varied at different stages of the family cycle. There were financial difficulties in the early years of marriage when the wife was forced to quit work to tend small children. Conversely individual wages meant less when a family functioned as a work unit – with father and adult sons working as mule-spinners, wife and grown-up daughters doing cleaning and carding and children acting as bobbin-minders or piecers. The notion of a national 'labour market' means little – since textile-workers rarely migrated from one region to another. They were not the atomized sellers of labour power beloved of classical economists but members of family groups and communities reluctant to 'get on their bikes'. Low female wages were less a function of supply and demand than that of cultural assumptions about women's work being merely complementary to that of males.

Villermé's work is also vitiated by its pervasive moralism. Despite assuming that the laws of supply and demand exerted downward pressure on wages, he felt that virtuous, thrifty workers could cope. Those unable to do so had failed a moral test. They failed to keep their homes clean, wasted money in cafés, produced too many babies. Paradoxically his writing served both to highlight problems of health and hygiene and of social inequality before death – and yet to deny that governmental action could provide remedies. As W. Coleman emphasizes he put his faith in economic expansion and moral reform of the working class (Coleman 1982). By drinking less and returning to family values the bulk of workers could improve. The rest, who lacked the character to do so, would bear the moral responsibility for their squalid fate. The dreadful problems of the textile towns duly horrified Villermé. But the remedy lay with the free market and with the individual – not in the utopia of socialist interventionists.

How plausible is Reddy's analysis? One could argue that, as C. Johnson comments, there is nothing particularly novel about the claim that workers are not atomized market actors but have more complex needs and aspirations and refuse to view themselves as simply selling their labour. The entire history of the labour movement grew from their refusal to play the market game and be treated as commodities (Johnson 1986). At times, too, Reddy appears to be in danger of denying the existence of the market and of working-class poverty. Just because bourgeois observers repeated each others' clichés about seven-year-old children walking miles to work at 5 am clutching crusts of bread or about the excrement-stained walls of the Lille cellars does not, per se, mean that the problems of child labour or slum housing were myths manufactured by an ideologically constructed bourgeois discourse.

Reddy's strengths and weaknesses are revealed by his treatment of labour disputes. He questions the orthodox view that the 'strike' is the natural form of protest, and that low incidence of strikes is a pointer to the low level of consciousness amongst textile-workers. He claims that all the participants – workers, employers, state bureaucrats – were involved in a new 'game', the rules of which were still unclear. The workforce, hitherto quasi-independent out-workers, found

themselves confronted with machines and factory discipline with which they were unsure how to deal.

Similarly, prefects were unsure whether to arbitrate or repress disputes. Reddy cites a conflict at Radapoint (Rouen) in 1839 when the employer sought to charge workers for oil which they used for lighting on evening shifts. When they refused to work evenings, they were locked out in the day. Workers contacted the public prosecutor before stepping up their action. He warned them that they faced criminal charges if they persisted. Twenty-four were jailed. The conflict lasted four weeks. Reddy says this should not be seen as a 'strike' – for the word '*grève*' was not used in this context until 1845. The dispute did not involve wages. The 'workers' felt themselves to be independent spinners questioning a subcontracting agreement. Their uncertainties were those of a transitional decade. This analysis is both original and yet ultimately questionable. It is valuable to be made to see early mill-workers as having a degree of job autonomy. But to claim that it was not a 'strike' was not invented until the word *grève* came into common usage is surely a nominalist absurdity? Reddy is concerned to see mill-workers as closer to 'artisans' in mentality than is usually thought. Yet artisans had conducted strikes for decades, indeed centuries, before 1839. And to define a strike as being ipso facto concerned with wages is narrowly economistic. In any case the spinners started their protest because their weekly income was being cut. And they did withdraw their labour. Johnson also surmises, on the basis of his own research in the Midi, that the stoppage was planned and that workers were aware of their legal rights. Agulhon has shown that peasants in Provence in these years were quite capable of consulting sympathetic lawyers if involved in communal rights disputes (Agulhon 1982).

Reddy's own account of the 1839 Lille dispute offers evidence that textile-workers were not merely capable of what looks like 'strike' activity but also of relatively sophisticated attempts to organize it. The dispute involved resistance to employers' fraudulent measurement of yarn produced by spinners. Four hundred workers met in a café to make an agreement, drawn up by an ex-bailiff, to collect funds from workers in other mills. The authorities later arrested the latter for organizing a strike fund, a plausible enough interpretation of what had occurred. If Reddy is on shaky ground in denying that this was a 'strike', he is surely correct to see the arrest of senior spinners as weakening workers' respect for Orleanist 'justice' and a step towards their politicization. Their immediate response was a mass protest outside the town hall. Nine years later the issue of employer fraud was raised again by the newly formed 'Republican Union of Spinners'.

The response of textile-workers to the post–1845 economic depression should not be dismissed as entirely 'archaic', though there were food riots and xenophobic attacks on immigrants. Much of what militancy there was, it is true, came from centres with declining handloom-weavers – Roanne, Vienne, Cholet. In Elbeuf there were calls for pay rises to meet rising food costs. In Alsace the depression strained the financial resources of employer paternalism. The most detailed survey of textile-worker attitudes and conditions is that conducted by economist A. Blanqui for the Rouen *patronat* after the involvement of their workers in rioting there in April 1848 (Demier 1982).

Blanqui was a flexible liberal who accepted the need for some moderate state intervention and who saw his task as provision of hard, 'scientific' facts which would be the foundation of a successful policy of social pacification. The employers were so disturbed by his 'facts' that they disowned his report. This covered nearly 5,000 workers in 23 mills – 39 per cent male, 34 per cent female, 26 per cent children. Wages had fallen since 1845 due to short-time working. Those few workers who had earlier put money away in savings banks had been forced to spend it. Though the work day had fallen from 15 hours to 13 hours since the 1830s, workers complained that work speeds had increased, leading to exhaustion and accidents. Many workers suffered from TB and curved spines. Their housing was in foul slums – 'savages breathe air, but not the inhabitants of the quartier St Vivien', Blanqui observed. Few workers had the strength to go on working after 45. Literacy was low, only one-third of mills made school provision. Employers, already denounced in 1836 by Charles Noiret as harsh and authoritarian, ignored the 1841 Child Labour Act and denied workers rights to run their own Mutual Aid Societies (Chaline 1986). Workers were less religious than their Flemish counterparts. When Blanqui asked, 'Do workers fulfil their religious duties?', one answer came back, 'Yes – the kids of two'. Employers congratulated themselves in 1847 on the docile response of their workers to the slump. But the new political circumstances of 1848 revealed how close to the surface workers' anger really was.

THE MINERS

Aguet suggests that signs of strike planning during disputes in the Loire coal-field in 1844 provide almost the first evidence of embryonic labour organization amongst authentically 'proletarian' workers (Aguet 1954). Should one, therefore, look to the coal-mines – a largely adult, male world – for the emergence of militancy outside the artisan sector?

French coal-mining was undergoing both quantitative growth and qualitative change. Production grew from 1 million to 5 million tons per year. Major mine companies began to invest in deeper shafts and capital-intensive mining techniques. Labour disputes grew from the resultant pressures imposed on miners' lifestyles and work practices.

Nevertheless, in the last resort, militancy in the mines was at best sporadic, politicization of disputes rare. Much conflict derived from the resistance of 'peasant-miners' to the advent of captitalist mining. As Gwynne Lewis has shown, mining in the Gard existed in the eighteenth century, carried out by peasants who dug shafts into the hillsides. The small quantity of coal extracted was sold to local consumers who used it to boil up silk-cocoons for the textile industry. Such proto-industry secured the viability of peasant farms in an area of low agricultural yield. When, in the 1770s, capitalist entrepreneur Tubeuf – armed with concessions from the court – tried to muscle his way into the area to concentrate the pits and sink deeper shafts to increase coal production, he aroused a storm of protest from those who feared that export of coal would drive up local fuel prices and destroy the balance of the local economy. Catholic peasants and peasant-miners turned

for protection to the local *seigneur*, the Marquis de Castres. Tubeuf was obstructed, harassed, physically assaulted. In the 1790s the Catholic-royalist counter-revolution in the Gard was fuelled by populist resistance to the intrusion of 'Protestant' capitalism into the proto-industrial economy (Lewis 1992).

The triumph of large-scale mining did not come until the 1820s. Paradoxically, the early stages of the 'bourgeois revolution' proved harmful to mining capitalism. The legislation of 1790, by affirming the rights of landed property, gave control of the subsoil minerals to a host of petty peasants. Only in 1810 did the Bonapartist regime reassert state rights to the subsoil and insist that only those with capital and technical expertise should be granted leases to minerals. Briefly after 1815 'traditionalists' in the Gard hoped that the Bourbons would repeal this law, but here – as in so much of its industrial policy – the new regime, despite its rhetoric, accepted de facto the need to compromise with capitalism. Whilst at the local political level the Gard appeared to be dominated by virulent ultra-royalists, the balance of economic power was shifting as large-scale capitalism took root. Deeper shafts were sunk, capital introduced, engineers assumed control of mining strategy and a mix of tighter labour discipline and embryonic company paternalism eroded the independence of 'peasant-miners'. By the 1840s coal production was dominated by big companies such as the Grand' Combes with, as yet, little resistance from full-time miners (Gaillard 1974).

However some French pits, even if 'capitalist', still employed peasant-miners, local recruits who retained plots of land. The 900 miners of Littry (Lower Normandy) often disappeared at harvest-time, their timekeeping was erratic. Earnings from the mine made their smallholdings viable, even if by the 1840s two-thirds were sons of men who had done pit work. Such local men were favoured by management who feared that 'outsiders' might import dangerous ideas. Young children had underground jobs operating ventilation fans or in haulage. This experience, insisted a Caen notable, encouraged 'young boys to grow out of childhood'. Accusations that such jobs deprived children of education, undermined their health and terrified them were thus groundless. Contemporary proto-positivists could point to the fact that 50 per cent of miners reached the age of 50 in 1825–9, 64 per cent by 1847–53, as evidence of improving health. However, real wages of Littry miners fell 19 per cent between 1816–19 and 1840–4. This could have led to either a drift from the pits or to wage disputes. In fact paternalist, even patriarchal, management strategies kept miners fairly docile. By the 1840s there was some concern at the fermentation of 'ideas of liberty and independence', some resistance to speed-ups. But company schools, free vaccinations, clothes hand-outs, awards to miners' children at First Communion and 'voluntary' donations to injured miners preserved the company's benevolent image. In the 1846–7 crisis the company gave bread hand-outs. 'It is very little really', one official admitted, 'but they receive it with a great deal of gratitude . . . and we have the satisfaction of knowing that their sufferings, which they tolerate with courage and resignation, do not make them deviate to the slightest degree from the straight and narrow path of their duties . . . or from the good order which has been established in the company'.

This docility stemmed largely from the introverted mentality of peasant-miners drawn from largely deferential agricultural labourers and marginal smallholders in

a Catholic region. They lived on farmsteads not concentrated in the pit *bourg*, so few community solidarities based on pit work developed. The focus of their family life and social aspirations remained the farm (Leménorel 1988). R. Trempé has noted a similar mentality amongst peasant-miners in Carmaux (Tarn), though here docility was slightly less marked – possibly because the local peasantry held larger farms and were more used to a degree of social independence (Trempé 1974).

Many miners – and iron-forge-workers – lived in the relative physical and cultural isolation of single-industry company towns under the tutelage of managements which often created 'patriarchal' relations even where firms were owned and controlled by distant Paris-based capital. Decazeville, a mining and iron-forging town in the Aveyron, offers one example. Here, as in the Gard, capitalist concessionaries had needed to overcome the hostility of local peasants in the late eighteenth century. By the Orleanist period the company was run by the technocrat Cabrol. Three quarters of miners were recruited from the surrounding Catholic peasantry. This was a mixed blessing. Such workers were relatively immune to urban radical ideologies – and Decazeville, a recent mushroom development town, had no established resident artisan class. On the other hand, miners' harvest work was, the manager noted, 'an annual tribute we pay to the farm'. They also took time off for fêtes, were 'unable to resist old habits despite the fines we impose'. In their eagerness to finish their pit shifts they often deliberately knocked down pit-props in order to accelerate the fall of coal.

Miners enjoyed much job autonomy at the coalface, working in subcontracted work teams as 'independent colliers', virtually free from engineers' control. To compensate for weak controls below ground, the company tried to tie workers to the firm by company housing schemes, the provision of low-price grain and of mutual aid societies. In the 1830s skilled forge-workers were scarce, and imported British workers proved predicatably arrogant and drunken. By the 1840s, however, management control over the labour process had tightened up. Local foremen were trained, hiring and firing were taken away from the skilled workers and put in management hands. All this helped to 'put an end to unreasonable demands'. A company training programme was established to produce the next generation of workers imbued with the company ethos. Paternalism was both an attempt to impose social control and to compensate workers for loss of job autonomy. The company's strategy was vindicated when the town stayed calm during the economic and political storms of 1845–8. They were undoubtedly assisted by the geographic isolation of the town, set in the Massif Central, and by the cultural characteristics of the local Aveyron peasantry whom they recruited – Catholic, introverted, subsistence farmers for whom 'politics' consisted of localized family feuds and who were less open to market agriculture or to national political debates then their counterparts in Burgundy or the Midi (Reid 1984)

Imaginative paternalism was a distinguishing feature of French industrial capitalism in these years – though its greatest flowering came later in the century. The reluctance of peasants to quit the land and France's already declining demographic growth created localized labour shortages. Whilst early industrial workers were not necessarily 'militant' in any orthodox sense, they were reluctant to adapt to industrial discipline. Frequent job changes, poor time-keeping, disappearance from mine

or forge to do harvest work were commonplace. As the railway network began to be constructed many miners flocked to better-paid rail navvying jobs. Where firms such as Schneider's Le Creusot sought to retain workers simply by pay rises they could find that workers took extra days off. Paternalism involved a strategy of finely calculated generosity. Company bakeries to provide cheap bread could cut wage bills.

The Anzin Coal Company's annual outlay on 'paternalism' came to around 10 per cent of its wage bill. The 134 firms which built housing calculated that heavy initial outlay would 'pay off' as fear of eviction inhibited militancy. Le Creusot, one of 150 firms with company schools, had places for 550 children who were taught basic literacy and numeracy, technical skills useful to future foremen – and loyalty to Schneider. Le Creusot and Anzin had medical schemes. 50 firms had pension provisions, many others had company-run mutual aid societies, based on compulsory deductions from wages. Accumulated pension contributions could be forfeited if workers quit their job or were sacked for militancy. Le Creusot's labour turnover was only half that of Fourchambault where paternalism was less developed. The end product of such strategies would, it was hoped, be a loyal, disciplined, industrious, efficient workforce which would be grateful to its 'benefactor' and immune to the subversive ideas of the big cities (Stearns 1978).

Anzin, the biggest individual coal firm in the 1830s, with 36 pits and 4,000 miners, offers a test case to study the effectiveness of such managerial strategies. With its board of directors in Paris containing many of the biggest names in French politics and banking, it was the symbol of the 'new' Orleanist capitalism. Unusually, much of its workforce were already second – or third-generation miners and solidarities built up since the previous century helped these to mount resistance to mine 'rationalization' as new pit-faces were opened up, deeper shafts sunk, underground rails installed and steam power introduced. To secure returns on capital outlay Anzin sought tighter labour discipline. Accelerated work pace increased the accident rate. Five thousand troops crushed the 1833 strike, despite sympathy from local populations critical of outsider 'Parisian' capitalism – local consumers and local boatmen who transported the coal and were fighting their own rearguard defence of their status as independent carriers against Anzin's plan to turn them into paid employees.

To limit labour unrest the company moved towards a cradle-to-grave approach in which miners' children were sent to company schools, then given jobs in ventilation and haulage in pits from an early age. Wives and daughters of miners were employed washing and sorting coal. Such employment for the entire family was rare in French coalfields. It provided a 'family subsistence wage'. But such security was bought at the price of loss of independence. Miners were trapped into acceptance of child labour. In 1846 there was a strike to resist the introduction of heavier underground trucks – which threatened the jobs of young hauliers. Yet clearly paternalism dulled the edge of labour protest. During the 1846–7 grain crisis cheap bread was provided (Geiger 1974).

Strikes in the Loire coalfield caused the greatest concern for the regime (Guillaume 1963, 1966; Tarlé 1936). In 1844 a strike at Rive-de-Giers lasted six weeks and involved 'offensive' demands for pay rises. It was organized, and developed

political overtones. It culminated in bloody clashes with troops. A four-week strike around St Etienne in 1846 again saw troops fire on strikers. During the 1840s the regime sanctioned the efforts of the Compagnie des Mines de la Loire (CML) to take over 60 pits. By 1846 this combine employed 5,000 of the region's 7,000 miners. But it aroused local hostility from a broad cross-section of the public. Local fuel consumers like ribbon-weavers and hardware manufacturers feared that 'monopoly' would raise coal prices – a fear shared by big glass and heavy-metallurgy employers. Small coal owners and coal merchants fought a rear guard action. The St Etienne municipality, dominated by the older commercial bourgeoisie, coordinated political resistance to outsider Parisian capital. Critics included Mgr de Bonald, archbishop of Lyon, Legitimist landowners, and republican lawyers who defended strikers in court and doctors who testified on the health hazards faced by the CML workers (Droulers 1961).

The battle between this motley band of opponents and the CML was complex and confusing. The combine dubbed its critics 'enemies of progress' and sought to bully or bribe them into submission. Big industrialist were offered preferential tariffs. But the Republican Lamartine revived the rhetoric of the late eighteenth century to denounce the CML as 'hoarders', 'monopolists' who threatened to undermine the promises of 1789 for a world of free but fair competition with no huge inequalities of wealth or power. A future Tacitus would label this the Age of the Stock Exchange in which the God Lucre was worshipped. But critics seized on other, inconsistent arguments. When the company tried to appease them by promising to fix price limits, they were accused of returning to the Jacobin 'maximum'!

Bourgeois opponents of the CML had predictably mixed reactions to miners' strikes. They gave rhetorical sympathy to honest toilers, driven to confront the new tyranny. But features of the 1844 strike were disturbing. It showed a high level of organization. Strikers toured the coalfield to prevent other miners from working, and sabotaged some machinery. More alarming still was the support given to the miners by socialist silk-weavers in Lyon who collected funds which were distributed via sympathetic *cabaretiers* in Givors. Socialist pamphlets were distributed. Local patois song writer Roquille was enlisted to perform protest songs.

The extent of miners' politicization remained modest. Petitions for the 'organization of work' received more signatures from skilled glass-workers than from pitmen. Heavy sentences were handed out to strike leaders – an indication of the public prosecutor's view that 'this coalition is not to be confused with those . . . which have broken out previously in a period of commercial crisis. This was not provoked by a real wage cut, it was, we must recognize, a declaration of war against the principle of merger . . . organized amongst local miners'.

The strike ended with a small pay rise offered by the CML, a mere tactical concession likely to be withdrawn as soon as it appeared safe to do so. The 1846 strike was less worrying – for the Stephenois miners involved were less organized, more geographically dispersed and closer to their peasant roots. As a result, it attracted more bourgeois support, with miners being bought drinks by bourgeois sympathizers. Six miners were shot dead by troops – but half of the 29 arrested were acquitted.

Hanagan has linked this unrest to miners' concern with a 'family subsistence wage' (Hanagan 1986). Real wages had fallen by one-third since 1837. Whilst male wages in the Loire pits were higher than those in the Nord, there were few jobs in the region for their wives, and few miners had additional resources from gardens or small farms. There were fewer child jobs than at Anzin. Miners' families thus relied heavily on adult male earnings. Ironically, family loyalties, so much vaunted in conservative rhetoric, provided a basis for worker mobilization. Indeed the liberal economist Blanqui used the family as a metaphor for worker solidarity: 'The ribbon-weavers, armourers, forge-workers, miners . . . live together like a family, by groups organized in almost military fashion, – as much disciplined for collective protest as they are little disciplined for work.' In 1846 a defence lawyer justified the behaviour of miners' families who stoned troops escorting arrested strikers: 'The authorities should have avoided . . . conveying . . . in open carts in broad daylight in the midst of crying mothers and wives . . . these poor workers who people knew at the bottom of their hearts to be in the right.'

Miners' life expectancy in the Loire was 37 – fully ten years less than that of local forge-workers. The CML was increasing work intensity, thereby increasing accident rates. Hours were lengthening, to 14 hours a day in some pits. Piecework payments were being introduced to try to break down team solidarities. Hence the strikers' demands included not merely wage but worker control of accident insurance funds and adequate representation on the Conseil des Prud'hommes. Alarmed by evidence of local support for the strikers, the company sought to soften its image by offering subsidized bread during the 1847 grain crisis.

Thus, as yet, miners were scarcely in the vanguard of labour protest. Many worked in remote company towns culturally isolated from the world of artisanal radicalism. Strikes at Anzin and in the St Etienne coalfield show that industrial militancy was spreading to the pits. Yet only in Rive-de-Gier were there real signs of politicalization – and even there 'politics' had to be 'imported' by local silk-weavers and skilled glass-workers. However new large-scale capitalist mining firms were often distrusted by many local inhabitants, so that miners could sometimes win broad community sympathy for their struggles.

THE LABOURING AND DANGEROUS CLASSES?

The composite sociological profile of Parisian crowds of the period 1789 to 1848 offered by historians who have followed in the pioneering footsteps of G. Rudé is sharply at odds with that proposed by contemporary conservative rhetoric – or by the recent neo-conservative historiography of modish writers such as Simon Schama. This latter made little attempt to identify the participants. It simply defined urban troublemakers as the rabble (*canaille*), the mob – violent, savage, ignorant, credulous sadists thirsting for blood. They were 'the labouring and dangerous classes'. Jacobinism, *sans-culottism*, socialism were, thus, the foul and perverted doctrines of depraved urban barbarians. Even as sophisticated a conservative as De Tocqueville could, thus, attribute the February 1848 insurrection to juvenile delinquents, always eager to tear up paving stones, and could personify

the typical socialist worker in the figure of the drunken wife-beater who lived in his *quartier* (Tocqueville 1971).

Even though scholarly research has done much to supply a corrective to such virulent prejudices, certain awkward questions remain. Have not historians sympathetic to popular movements perhaps portrayed a Parisian popular culture of improbable respectability and earnestness – a world of sober, industrious skilled men, proud of their crafts, each one seeking only to provide for his wife and 3.24 children? The *bête noire* of such left-wing historians remains Louis Chevalier, author of the controversial classic *Classes Labourieuses, Classes Dangereuses* (Chevalier 1973). Critics of this work agree that it is idiosyncratic – a strange blend of positivistic historical demography, literary evidence and – implicit – quirky socio-political views. Yet however distasteful Chevalier's book might be to Marxist sensibilities, its central argument cannot simply be swept under the carpet. His Paris is a city in which popular insurrection emerges as the consequence of uncontrolled demographic growth, in-migration, urban squalor, under-employment, family breakdown, endemic violence and crime. His inusrgents are *déracinés* recent migrants, dwellers in *garnis* (lodging-houses), homeless juvenile delinquents, petty-thieves, prostitutes. The city does contain 'artisans' – but because of chronic under-employment these, too, live on the edge of subsistence, are forced to pawn their tools and are relentlessly dragged down into the subculture of misery and crime.

Was popular Paris thus divided between a narrow world of sober-minded, autodidact craftsmen active in associationist projects and a much larger culture of the type portrayed by Chevalier? If so, how did these two cultures interrelate? To approach this question we will first outline Chevalier's main arguments, then suggest some of the standard objections to them in recent neo-Marxist historiography and finally – via use of A. Faure's seminal analysis of carnivals – offer a view of Parisian popular culture which, whilst avoiding Chevalier's 'excesses', suggest a more unruly Rebelaisean world than that which emerges from the literature on radical artisans.

Between 1800 and 1846 the Parisian population doubled to 1 million. A further 350,000 lived in the outer suburbs beyond the *octroi* tax *barrières* – in La Villette, Belleville . . . Most of this demographic growth came from in-migration from northern and eastern France. Hence contemporaries spoke of the city as a nomads' camp being swamped by provincial 'savages at the doorstep of civilization [evoking] more disgust than pity' (Buret); 'barbarians as alien to the savages . . . portrayed by Fenimore Cooper – only these savages dwell in our midst' (E. Sue). It was, Chevalier claims, a 'sick' city lacking basic amenities and haunted by the fear of crime. Although many migrants worked in the construction industry, they built rail stations, new boulevards, fortifications, bourgeois villas in the west end of the city – *not* homes for the working class, which was forced to seek accommodation in tiny attics built on top of existing multi-storey buildings or in overcrowded *garnis*, the population of which grew from 23,000 to 50,000 between 1831 and 1846. 'Monsieur Vautour' the mythical exploitative landlord of Daumier's cartoons, became a bogeyman of popular demonology (Passeron 1981). Water was a luxury in popular *quartiers* during periodic 'times of thirst'. Many streams were open

sewers, producing a fetid atmosphere in which inhabitants lived, as one contemporary claimed 'in liquid shadows like reptiles in a swamp'. Parent-Duchâtelet's report on the need for new sewage construction was ignored.

Chevalier views the cholera epidemic of 1831 as exacerbating class tensions by exposing so starkly the social inequality before death (see above). Yet even in 'normal' years the death rate remained at 30 per 1,000 amongst young migrants in their 20s and 30s. It was higher in the mid 1840s than 30 years earlier. Conscription statistics suggested that the average size of young men was falling. The city's sexual imbalance, produced by the influx of male migrants, may have exacerbated sexual tensions, weakened family ties and boosted prostitution to cater for single male workers. One-third of all births were illegitimate, one-quarter of all babies abandoned – and half died before the age of 12 months. Thousands of teenagers were homeless, did casual jobs, drifted into gang warfare and petty-crime. Conservative mythology viewed them as the dry tinder which could be ignited to fuel the flames of revolution. Many working-class couples lived together in *concubinage*, scornfully rejecting the efforts of the clergy to get them to regularize their unions. Asked why they did not marry, they replied 'by citing the example of their friends – these examples in their opinion absolve them of the accusation of immorality which would encompass too many people'.

The major outcome of urban squalor, uprooting and family disintegration was crime, with which Parisians allegedly became obsessed. It was no longer viewed as picturesque but as ubiquitous and deeply threatening and as likely to involve not merely the marginalized 'floating' poor but the entire labouring population, since poverty and fluctuating employment could drive the hardest-working families downwards into law breaking. The gallery of characters in Hugo's *Les Misérables* – Valjean the convict, Fantine the working girl turned prostitute, Gavroche the street urchin – suggest a social milieu where the boundaries between the labouring and the criminal classes are ill defined, and a world where the convict, assured of lodging and food, may be better off than many 'free' workers. Eugene Sue's *Mystères de Paris*, in which a knight-errant hero, Rodolphe, penetrates the lower depths of the city, was a bestseller, and the *Gazette des Tribuneaux* kept the goriest of crime trials before the eyes of the Parisian newspaper-reading public. Parent-Duchâtelet's report on prostitution claimed that one in eight of the city's 15,000 regular prostitutes were under the age of 12.

The dominant tone of comment on Parisian culture came to be one of disgust. 'It is getting to be too much for me', Proudhon remarked, 'living in this city of masters and servants, thieves and prostitutes.' Economic depression in 1846–7 merely compounded the city's problems – leaving thousands of building-workers unemployed, forcing artisans to pawn their tools. Vagrancy and theft rates rose. More than 1,000 suicides were recorded in 1846, many ending their lives in the Seine, 'the great receptacle of the victims of despair'.

Chevalier's implicit thesis is that the cycle of Parisian insurrections should be interpreted as a product of this pathological sickness of a city in which, despite the emergence of a few modern factories like the La Chapelle locomotive works, the 'modern' industrial sector was small and underemployment endemic. The popular culture of violence amongst ill-assimilated recent migrants could express

itself in crime – or on the barricades. The 'class war' of 1848 was a settling of accounts between native Parisians and nomads.

How much of Chevalier's thesis has survived subsequent criticism which has questioned both his empirical data on working-class marriage, prostitution and crime and his underlying assumption which equates the revolutionary insurgents with the criminal classes? Opponents have argued that the book is merely a pseudo-positivistic reassertion of classic elite prejudices and stereotypes. Since the bougeoisie feared both crime and socialism as threats to property, was it not natural that they should blur the distinction between the criminal and the socialist? Does not Chevalier assert rather than prove this equation? His blending of quantitative demography, positivistic sociology, literary sources and biological metaphors – Paris as a sick' city in which cholera gives class war a biological dimension – is an uneasy one. Rudé has argued that whilst central Paris in the 1790s, as in the 1840s, certainly had a 'floating population' of migrant casual labourers who do appear in records both of 'crime' and of unorganized popular protest (food riots), the distinctiveness of Parisian popular politics across this half-century lay in the capacity of artisans from the faubourgs of the eastern city to engender more organized and politicized forms of activity – from the Sections of the Year II to the clubs of 1848. (Rudé 1973). Chevalier's tendency to ignore this second group, or to elide it with the first, is thus seen as unconvincing. Chevalier's Durkheimian insistence that social upheaval stems from *déracinement* and social disintegration has been questioned by evidence which suggests the disproportionately high rate of participation in political revolts of middle-aged, skilled, married workers with solidarities, roots and 'resources' in their trades and their neighbourhoods. Of those involved in the disturbance of the early 1830s over half were artisans, barely one-sixth unskilled labourers (Pinkney 1972b). The involvement of recent migrants and adolescents was low in proportion to their numbers in the population.

This is not to deny that Paris was a violent city with a high crime rate. But historians of the late eighteenth century would dispute Chevalier's emphasis on the novelty of these features. There had been substantial migration to the city in the years before 1789, there had been a sizeable 'floating' population of casual labourers and, as C. Andrews has shown, one of the less publicised functions of the radical *sans-culotte* Sectional cadres of the Year II had been precisely to patrol the city and control the crime and disorder of this stratum (Andrews 1971). Nor were the problems of Paris in the 1815–48 period unique. Mayhew's London clearly contained a huge under-class. Yet London Chartism was dominated by radical tailors, shoe-makers, silk-weavers. Indeed the contrast between the evolution of popular culture in the two capital cities from the 1840s onwards, lies – as G. Stedman Jones has shown – in the much more rapid decline of London's crafts. By the 1960s London had, indeed, become a city of casual labourers, sweated outworkers and servants – with relatively few 'artisans' or factory-workers. This may have been a recipe for criminality in the mid-Victorian decades. It scarcely seems to have been, in itself, the basis for insurrectionary or revolutionary outbursts but rather for a long period (c.1848-c.1880) of popular political quiescence, increasingly tainted by popular jingoism (Stedman-Jones 1971).

Nor was Paris the only city in France to experience demographic growth, in-

migration, and an increase in crime. As Savey-Cassard's analysis of Lyon shows, 56 per cent of 'criminals' in the city were recent migrants. It would simply be absurd to correlate Lyone criminality with the ethos of the *canut*-dominated labour movement (Savey-Cassard?).

There is no clear evidence that Parisian crime rates rose substantially faster than the city's population growth. The 1846–7 peak in theft rates has been correlated specifically with the economic crisis of those years marked by high food prices and unemployment. Later in the century the correlation between property crime and economic crisis declined (Zehr 1976). Such crimes may have become linked more with relative than absolute deprivation. Rising theft rates were not a phenomenon confined to Paris alone. Nor is Chevalier's suggestion that insurrectionary violence in Paris is linked closely to a heavy influx of migrants entirely convincing – for the most rapid in-migration rates were to be during the 1850s and the 1870s which were, for political reasons connected with the defeat suffered by labour in 1851 and 1871, decades of comparative calm.

Chevalier's critics thus claim that he has both over-dramatized Parisian crime and violence and deliberately confused individual 'anti-social' behaviour with the collective action of social groups. The 'criminality' of the city in the 1830s and 1840s was largely a 'social' criminality, and inchoate reaction of the urban poor to misery, underemployment, cyclical and structural economic crisis. It often involved casual labourers, juveniles, vagrants, prostitutes. But attempts to link this directly with the city's ongoing propensity for popular protest remain less convincing, on balance, than C. Tilly's emphasis that the seedbed of such revolt lay in the solidarities of trades and of *quartiers* rather than in the *déracinement* of recent mass migration.

Most Parisian female workers were employed in textiles, in the sweated end of the clothing trade, in making *articles de Paris* or as laundresses, servants or street-sellers. Chevalier says little about female employment per se, but does offer generalizations about sexual relationships within the working class and about the influence of the female labour market on women's sexual behaviour. Male in-migration produced a 'shortage' of women in the popular neighbourhoods which, in turn, was a cause of weak family ties. The prostitution industry thus grew to 'service' the sexual needs of young, single male migrant workers (Corbin 1978). Only later in the century did the Parisian popular classes put down roots and develop a more stable family life. Hence by the later nineteenth century the prostitution industry no longer simply involved impoverished women selling sex to migrants (and soldiers) but came to involve many 'professional' women who provided more sophisticated services to a bourgeois clientele. In the 1830s to 1840s, Chevalier claims, a rising illegitimacy rates were the logical outcome of plebian culture in which the institution of marriage was ignored by many working-class couples who lived together in *concubinage*.

For Catholics such as Le Play these 'facts' spoke of working-class immorality, of the collapse of family values. The were symptomatic of wider social dislocation. Modern historians have suggested other interpretations. 'Optimists' like E. Shorter have suggested that the advent of capitalism, by multiplying paid female jobs, stimulated an uprecedented degree of female economic independence which, in

turn, permitted greater sexual liberty 'expressive sexuality'. Rising illegitimacy rates were thus, simply a by-product of a first phase of women's liberation. 'Pessimists' have argued that the crisis of the artisanal trades may have disrupted existing marriage strategies, since young couples had habitually sought to marry at the point that a journeymen could hope to set up his own small workshop.

But are Chevalier's basic assumptions about worker's sexual and family behaviour correct? Was *concubinage* a widespread working-class habit, 'one of the forms of popular civilization'? M. Frey studied 8,588 case histories in the archives of the St François Régis society, established 'to snatch the poor from the misfortune and crime of illegitimate cohabitation' (Frey 1978). Twenty-five per cent of Parisian households were of this sort, one-third of them enduring above six years. It was, thus, commonplace in the city. Small employers giving evidence on behalf of their female employees in court cases often gave good character references to women who were *concubines*. Ninety per cent of the women involved in such liaisons were working-class, but one-third of the men were petty-bourgeois. Hence *concubinage* was not confined entirely to the working class.

Most women involved in these relationships appear to have regarded them either as a step towards marriage – or as a 'second best' option. Many were able to change partners if their existing cohabitee was violent or jealous, lending some support to Shorter's thesis. But their 'freedom' was limited by their obvious vulnerability to violence and by the low level of female wages. Of the men in Frey's sample 74 per cent earned above 3 francs per day – but only 0.90 per cent of the women did so. Indeed *concubines* tended to come from the lowest-paid trades. So, too, did prostitutes – women 'seeking in misconduct a supplement for their resources – and ending up belonging only nominally to the profession they are supposed to be exercising'.

During the 1830s the authorities commissioned a report on the prostitution problem. Its author, Parent-Duchâtelet, was an eccentric proto-positivist whose scientific expertise had earlier been focused on the Parisian sewage system (Hansin 1985). Prostitution was, he claimed, 'a sewer of another type, a sewer more impure, I swear, than all the others'. With police assistance he interviewed prostitutes, inspected them like livestock and – anticipating the scientific techniques of future Annaliste historians – compiled statistical tables which revealed the percentage who had blue eyes or tattoed buttocks. He started out with the supposition that prostitutes were a distinct subspecies, biologically programmed to sexual excess, but concluded that most were simply ordinary working women – half of them from the sweated clothing sector – who simply could not earn enough to live on from their trade. Most drifted into prostitution when a parent died, when they lost their job or because they were migrants to the city with no kinship network to sustain them.

If this was a relatively enlightened conclusion, it was reached because of the assumption that the new social science had a right and duty to pry into the lives of the lower orders, to control and regulate. and, predictably, the findings were used – by Parent-Duchâtelet himself and the police – to argue that since any working woman risked being driven into prostitution, then *all* working women found in the streets, cafés or *garnis* should be treated, ipso facto, as potential

prostitutes. Hence up to 3,000 per year were arrested simply for being on the streets. These assumptions reinforced the existing regulatory system which licensed prostitution as a necessary evil. Prostitutes had to register as *filles soumises* – as women who had submitted to the licensing system. They carried a permit, were confined to specific parts of the city and subjected to regular police and medical inspections for VD. Any working woman was liable to be arrested on the streets on suspicion of being a *fille insoumise*, held without trial, jailed. The Prefect of Police rejected calls for legal protection for such women as a recipe for 'insubordination'. 'The salutory curb which maintains them in this absolutely necessary condition of dependence would be broken.' Corbin argues, à la Foucault, that this regulatory system trapped working-class women in a 'carceral archipelago' of brothel, hospital, prison. Harsin claims that it served to marginalize thousands of working women. Once labelled as 'deviants' by a single arrest, they became reliant thereafter on the favours of the *police des moeurs*. Re-entry into their original trade was difficult. Yet, as Coffin argues, they were not entirely without support from the wider working-class community (Coffin 1982). Male workers shared their resentments at police surveillance of cafés and *garnis* which the quest for clandestine prostitutes necessitated. In the months before the 1830 Revolution the Bourbon police had aroused resentment by their bid to enclose all prostitutes in brothels – raising the entire issue of civil rights for working women. In July 1830 crowds of workers and prostitutes stoned a brothel. In 1848 the St Lazaire jail, where prostitutes were confined, was stormed. Hence, as M. Perrot has observed, prostitutes were *not* treated by revolutionary crowds as marginalized 'criminals', instead they had taken on the mantle of defiant popular liberties (Perrot 1977). However, *pace* Chevalier, these revolutionary crowds showed no such identification with other 'criminal' elements in the jails – no attempt was made to free them.

One of the specific goals of *L'Atelier* was to 'react against certain immoral ideas which have support from members of our own class . . . to uproot the habit of St Monday, to instil hatred of degradation, of drunkenness, of betting, of debauchery, of obscene songs in the street' (Cuvillier 1954; Rancière 1988). Clearly the Parisian craft elite had certain reservations about aspects of the city's popular culture. Faure's study of Parisian Carnival suggests that a balanced view of the links between urban culture and urban revolt must seek to bridge the apparent gulf between the concern of orthodox labour historiography with radical artisans and Chevalier's obsession with degradation and crime (Faure 1978).

In a city where poor housing made domestic life difficult, the popular classes found compensation in a vigorous sociability centred around cafés, *guingettes, bals* and festivals. Carnival provided an outlet for popular expressionism which, in itself, could be interpreted as containing the seeds of revolt – of a 'world turned upside down'. The elites were aware that the tolerated licence of the fête – which in normal times offered a relatively harmless safety-valve – could degenerate into riot. The 'traditional' Carnival was a brief period of delirious excess marking the end of winter and prefacing another year of humdrum toil. The recent historiography of peasant society has hinted at ways in which during the Second Republic masked Carnival bands of villagers in the Midi blurred the distinction between the 'lived utopia' of the fete – with its collective symbolism of happiness, abundance,

equality – and the 'real' word of social relations and radical politics. (Agulhon 1982). To what extent can a similar analysis be made for Paris?

Carnival was a 'festival of the senses' marked by huge meals and vibrant *sociabilité* within popular *quartiers*. Workers flocked to dance-halls which clustered round the customs barriers which divided the city proper from its outlying suburbs. Belleville and Courtille, two favoured haunts, thus enjoyed a dubious reputation amongst the city authorities. Many workers did overtime in the weeks before Carnival, only to 'squander' their earnings in a few days of conspicuous consumption. Even mutual aid societies sometimes 'blew' their year's savings.

The tone was decidedly scatalogical. There were endless jokes about farting and burping. Passers by were smeared with chocolate. Farting was a sign of well-being. The phrase *on a bien vécu* (we lived well) was used to signify consumption of large amounts of food. In a city with poor sewage facilities, the ability to derive laughter from filth was a precious gift.

But Carnival had egalitarian symbolic overtones. Songs asserted that death was the great leveller

Messieurs, ne vous déplaise
Vous ne serez pas plus que nous
Chez la Père Lachaise
Quand nous y serons tous

(Gentlemen, don't be annoyed
You will be no better than us
When we are all together
In the Père Lachaise cemetary)

It was thus a source of popular resentment that the increasing scarcity of land led to a rapid rise in burial costs. A growing percentage of workers thus ended in communal graves, unable to afford a decent funeral or an individual burial plot.

Faure confirms Chevalier's emphasis on the importance of cholera in accentuating the awareness of class divisions in the city. During the 1832 Carnival figures wearing Death's Head Masks collapsed and died of cholera. Cholera was viewed as a poor man's disease. When two National Guards officers tried to persuade workers that one of their friends had the disease, they were told: 'Pull the other one! Who are you trying to kid? You can tell by your high collars and épaulettes that you're too rich to have the cholera!' Popular reactions to the death of wealthy victims was often one of joy. Observing a bourgeois funeral one worker observed: 'Today, at least, he's not looking down his nose at the pedestrians. A rich man a human being? Get away with you! If he were still alive he'd be as bad as the rest of them!'

By 1840 Paris had some 150 dance-halls. These were normally socially segregated, but social mixing occurred during the *bals masqués* of Carnival week. In the early 1830s St Simonian students had shocked fellow bourgeois by attending *bals* in popular neighbourhoods. The 'St Simonienne' was a new dance of the period! In the following years 'Milord Arsouille', an upper-class dandy who appeared in disguise in popular festivals, became a folk legend. Faure suggests that he may

have been the model for Eugène Sue's knight-errant Rodolphe in *Les Mystères de Paris* – even that the popular Bonapartism of the late 1840s may have been nurtured by the idea of Louis Napoleon as 'Milord Arsouille' entering the lower depths to aid the poor.

Orleanist authorities were aware of the levelling symbolism of the Carnival. In street processions and street theatre there were competitions held for abusive repartee – often directed against the rich. The Queen of the Ball was usually a laundress or a seamstress. Women were jailed in 1844 for dancing the can-can, a dance originating amongst the city's working women and which one bureaucrat described as 'a manifestation of the profound corruption which threatens to penetrate all sections of society.' Dances such as *la galope* could, in themselves, appear dangerously close to street riots.

Were the symbolic 'games of equality' during Carnival really, as Faure argues, a 'school of insubordination'? Were the rituals potentially a vehicle for social protest? Certainly after the traumas of the Year II the Thermidorian police had banned urban fêtes. Their Bonapartist counterparts allowed them to revive only under tight surveillance. The Orleanist years may have marked the apogee of the politicized Carnival. Tilly has argued that these years marked a transitional period in which 'traditional' forms of popular mobilization – Luddism, food riots, forest invasions, tax revolts and 'politicized' carnivals and charivari – still flourished, but came to coexist with 'modern' forms – elections, strikes, political associations (Tilly 1982). The former, he argues, were localized, often involving broad strata of the community. The latter, aiming at national political goals, usually involved self-conscious, organized activists. But during the 1830s and 1840s anti-Orleanist political activists learned to use, for example, the *charivari* as a vehicle for political theatre. They pushed the folklore repertoire to its limits – thereby posing problems which the regime found difficult to solve.

In 1840, a year of strike activity in Paris, mannequins of Orleanist notables were burned in the Rue St Denis. In 1843 the police were driven to attempt to ban such mannequins from Carnival floats. A ubiquitous satirical figure in Parisian carnivals came to be 'Robert Macaire' – Daumier's cartoon character who epitomized the archetypical Orleanist swindler. Masks of this bogeyman appeared in carnival processions to mock the rule of the financial oligarchy. As early as 1832, in a Republican masquerade in Grenoble, Louis Phillipe had been portrayed as Daumier's famous 'pear', subservient to the clergy and to the British. Twenty were wounded when troops were sent in to break up mocking crowds. Daumier's cartoons, which earned him a spell in jail, also depicted the king as Gargantua – another Carnival figure – seated on a chamber-pot. Peasants and workers stagger up a ramp to pour France's agricultural and industrial produce into his mouth, while he defecates banknotes and sinecures to his wealthy friends from his backside. Another feature of the Parisian fête were figures dressed as the king who went around shaking hands with tramps – a mockery of Louis Philippe's celebrated false bonhomie.

In 1831 the riots at St Germain l'Auxerrois, which ransacked the archbishop's palace, occurred during Carnival – with many of the participants wearing masks as they paraded in clerical garb and threw reliquaries into the Seine. One could

argue that the new Orleanist authorities may have tolerated these anti-clerical blasphemies as a useful safety-valve for popular anger. And clearly it would be a mistake to argue that Carnival was, per se, a cause of revolt. Nevertheless, Faure is probably correct to claim that it provided a 'reservoir of ceremonial forms through which . . . men gave vent to their sufferings and hopes'. And, as the regime found to its cost, Carnival could not be just directed at will against peripheral targets like the clergy. The 1848 February rising occurred at Carnival time. Historians have commented on the way in which the bodies of those killed in the first clashes with the troops were carried round the faubourgs to revive activist emotions from past revolutions. What they failed to notice, Faure claims was that the crowds had been engaged in ritualized charivaris mocking the authorities, that the corpses were carried on Carnival floats and that in the following days the rites of Carnival integrated perfectly with the revolutionary events. The crowds who stormed the Tuileries palace carried the throne and burned it. A prostitute draped herself in red. Dummies of 'Monsieur Vautor' were burned and, as terrified bourgeoisie took off their hats to working-class passers by (*chapeau bas devant la casquette!*) the city appeared to be living out the utopian levelling of Carnival. For a few brief weeks the world did, indeed, seem to have been turned upside down.

After the defeat of the popular movement of the Second Republic, the Bonapartist regime set out to systematically 'neuter' and tame the urban fête. It survived only in a more decorous, organized and commercialized form – with shopkeepers financing advertising floats. During the Third Republic the 14 July official festival became respectable. The tradition of a popular 'queen' chosen from laundresses gave way to beauty contests judged by Republican notables.

Any conclusions to this section must remain tentative and provisional. It is clear that it is equally misleading to attempt to epitomize Parisian popular culture either in the figure of the sober, austere, autodidact reader of *L'Atelier* or in that of Chevalier's drunken, brutalized, criminal casual labourer. Fortunately the recent historiography, represented by the work of Faure or Rancière, does suggest potentially fruitful ways in which to 'place' popular protest within the teeming, vital, often unruly world of cafés, *guingettes*, *bals*, festivals and songs in which most Parisian workers, including may 'artisans', lived.

4

Towards 1848

WORKERS AND REPUBLICANS

The overthrow of the Orleanist regime was an 'accident' in the sense that rioting, resulting from the government's attempt to ban an election reform banquet in Paris in February 1848, escalated into an insurrection which took by surprise even those who had predicted it. None of the regime's Republican or working-class opponents had planned the revolt – even though some Blanquist had responded to the repressive clampdown of the 1830s by forming secret societies dedicated to insurrection led by a vanguard group of militants.

By 1846–8 economic depression and obstinate government refusal to concede political reform created the possibility of a broad opposition popular front ranging from strata of the working class, the petty-bourgeoisie – excluded from the franchise – to authentic bourgeois. These latter included not only students and younger, less affluent, strata of the professional classes (lawyers, doctors, journalists) but also some medium-sized industrialists who resented the hold of the financial oligarchy on the regime and the credit shortage to industry. Some were provincial businessmen who feared the spread of the tentacles of Parisian capital into their regions, or members of the 'older' bourgeoisie who disliked the ruthlessness of new industrial firms such as the CML coal combine.

One crucial issue for popular politics was, thus, the complex relationship between workers, the embryonic labour movement, and the anti-Orleanist – usually Republican – bourgeoisie. In worker discourse the bourgeois 'enemy' was usually defined as comprising a narrow oligarchy of the very rich 'parasites' – bankers, large landowners, rentiers. What remained problematic was worker attitudes towards the middling strata – professionals, small- and medium-scale industrialists.

The 'Republican bourgeoisie' was itself heterogeneous in social composition and ideology. 'Moderates' tended to be linked to the class fractions of the economic bourgeoisie excluded from the Orleanist elite. They were cautious, legalistic, critical of the regime's foreign policy and of its concessions to clericalism. They believed, in principle, in free markets and private property, but regarded rejection of all social reform as dangerous as likely, sooner or later, to provoke popular violence. If they had few contacts with the 'extreme' socialist groups they neverthe-

less flirted with a vague 'associationist' rhetoric to express their sympathy for the more peaceful forms of worker organization.

'Radical' Republicans had made efforts, notably in the SDH, in the early 1830s, to woo worker support. Thereafter some had drifted into Blanquist secret societies, which had staged an abortive coup attempt in 1839. Others had come to concentrate on political reform and encouragement of the associationist movement. Pierre Joigneaux's career is not untypical. The son of a well-to-do wine-carter in Burgundy, he had inherited his father's Voltairean and Republican sympathies. As a student in the 1830s he was jailed for involvement in Blanquist secret societies. He then returned to Burgundy as a journalist on a left-liberal paper and sought to win over local small-town artisans and wine-growers to cooperative ideas. He was close to the editorial board of *La Réforme* on which neo-Jacobins and sympathizers with Louis Blanc's ideas were well represented. (Magraw 1978).

Once source of contact between workers and the 'progressive' middle class had been the St Simonian 'missions' which toured the popular quartiers in the early 1830s. Martin Nadaud was sceptical of the impact of their message which, he argued, passed above the heads of workers. Nevertheless, the artisan journalists who wrote for *La Ruche Populaire* such as P. Vinçard were more ambivalent. Vinçard warned workers against the arrogant technocracy and absurd religious mysticism which disfigured one wing of the St Simonian movement. But his own vocabulary was clearly influenced by the productivist language of St Simonians and their emphasis on a society where each should be rewarded according to his, or her, efforts. Similarly Vinçard oscillated between warning workers against middle-class leadership and admiration for Eugene Sue, whose novels, widely read in serialized *feuilleton* form, exposed the social inequalities of Orleanist Paris.

Such ambiguities pervaded the entire left. The Blanquists warned against alliances with bourgeois Republicans and advocated a revolutionary coup to be staged by a militant vanguard which would seize the state to smash the power of the bureaucracy, the oligarchy and the clergy. Yet Blanqui shared the concern of many Republicans with anti-clericalism and secular education as prerequisites for a more democratic society. The definition of the 'proletariat' which he gave included the 30 million who were, he claimed, not part of the 1 million in the oligarchy. Such a definition clearly encompassed many strata beyond industrial workers (Spitzer 1957).

The memoirs of Martin Nadaud illustrate the complexities of class relations and class identity. As Agulhon remarks, had Nadaud been faced with the question 'Are you a socialist or a Republican?' he would have reacted with surprise because he regarded the two as linked, almost as synonymous (Nadaud 1976). His own class identity was, after all, problematic. From the early 1830s he had walked regularly hundreds of kilometres every spring with his father – an anti-clerical, Jacobin-Bonapartist stonemason – to work on Parisian construction sites. In Paris these Limousin migrants were sneered at as dirty, crude, chestnut-eating, patois-speaking country hicks who lodged in filthy *garnis* and were involved in dance-hall brawls. In their native villages they were an admired elite whose big city earnings enabled them to consolidate their small farms and command a choice of marriage partners (Corbin 1975). Because literacy was useful to them for postal contacts

with their families, they had often learned to read and write – rare accomplishments in a region of low literacy. Nadaud was, thus, a peasant-worker. Yet the complexity of his class identity did not end there. During the 1840s he spent time as a subcontractor, organizing work gangs for big construction employers – which gave him the possibility of establishing himself as a small building employer.

All this may help explain Nadaud's own ambiguous attitudes. He became a 'militant' because of his lived experiences in Paris. He witnessed '1830', the repression of 1834–5, the cavalry charge which dispersed striking building-workers in 1840. He felt a victim of the class prejudices of the Parisian elite, admired the ideas of Blanc. Yet he did not hate all 'bourgeois', nor did he advocate an autonomous worker movement. He was touchingly grateful to the Republican student who shook his hand in a Paris *cabinet de lecture* and complimented him on reading a serious newspaper. He admired Cabet – who invited workers in their dirty work clothes into his home – lawyers who defended strikers in court, deputies like Argo who raised the 'social question' in Parliament. He taught evening classes for his fellow migrants – and praised even Guizot for the 1833 Education Act which had set up a school in each commune and begun to train professional primary school teachers. Education was needed to mould a worker vanguard. But it was important, too, because the literate worker could win the respect of the bourgeoisie – could force the middle classes to cease to look down on the masses. It would also 'civilize' the workers, prevent the internecine brawling between rival *compagnons* or between Limousin migrants from different villages. Violence was divisive, brutalizing – and a violent revolution ought, if possible, to be avoided.

Agulhon denies that Nadaud was an 'uncle Tom'. But his role in the Revolution of 1848 is foreshadowed by his earlier career. In June 1848, on which his memoirs are judiciously silent, he probably sympathized with the insurgents' grievances without approving of their resort to arms. Conversely, as one of a handful of worker deputies, he was grateful to radical bourgeois deputies who gave him encouragement when he braved the scorn of conservatives to stand up in parliament and, with his Limousin accent and clumsy phraseology, put the workers' case for social reform. For him the 'worker movement' only made sense as part of a broader progressive coalition.

In order to assess the extent to which Republican-worker alliances held the key to popular politics it is intended to take three case studies of provincial towns. Toulouse had been notorious as a bastion of popular royalism (Aminzade 1981). The aristocratic elite played on perceptions that the Revolution, through its assault on church and the Parlement, had undermined the foundations of the local economy, thereby reducing both the employment and the charitable hand-outs available to artisans. During the early 1830s Legitimists organized clandestine popular paramilitary groups. Popular culture in the city still revolved around Catholic penitent *confrèries* and the old aristocracy retained sufficient clout in the economy to sustain its paternalist hold. Steadily, however, demographic growth was creating new worker suburbs outside the old city heartland of legitimist control.

By the early 1840s the tone of protest politics in the city on issues such as taxation and electoral reform was being set by the Republicans – who included the liberal professions but also businessmen resentful at the regime's apparent

neglect of the transport infrastructure of the region. Relationships between them and the workers were not uniformly harmonious. The Republican newspaper *L'Emancipation* angered print-workers by bringing in blacklegs to break their strike and they then boycotted the funeral of a Republican leader. The cautious legalism of Republican leaders made some workers impatient. However, on the eve of 1848 relations were improving. Paternalist charity offered by both Legitimist and Orleanist elites proved inadequate to meet the scale of popular distress in the post–1846 slump. Republican leaders espoused a vague 'associationist' rhetoric to express sympathy with artisans' social aspirations. Workers' mutual aid societies were now usually secular, no longer under the patronage of the clergy, and Republicans exploited emerging anti-clericalism by directing popular anger against sexual scandals involving the religious orders. Police reported that whilst the Republican leadership was still firmly middle-class, 12 per cent of activists were small-masters, 51 per cent journeymen and workers.

In contrast, Nantes had long been a 'blue' Republican stronghold in the predominantly Catholic-royalist rural west (Guin 1976). Social tensions between the popular movement and the mercantile elites had flared up in 1793–4, but had usually been held in check by their common fear of peasant counter-revolution. The economy, hit by the British blockade until 1815, was recovering by the 1820s. By the late 1840s the city had 15 major machine factories, 20 shipyards, six sugar refineries, eight food-canning plants and a declining textile industry, together with a sizeable artisanal sector of hatters, shoe-makers and tailors.

Large-scale unemployment in 1829–30 had given the anti-Bourbon agitation of the bourgeoisie popular sympathy. After 1830 the mercantile and industrial elite espoused Orleanism, but was challenged by a Republican group headed by Dr Guépin who had both petty bourgeois and worker support. Guépin urged workers to avoid violence. And, as in the 1790s, fear of pro-Bourbon counter-revolution in the rural hinterland served to hold together the 'blue' forces in the city. Charity workshops took the edge off social distress in 1831–2.

Nevertheless by 1834 the SDH claimed 1,000 members in the city, including many artisans. Its leadership, more radical than Guépin, included M. Rochet – a former skilled worker who now ran a medium-sized stove-making factory. The SDH urged its supporters not to follow Lyon into insurrection. For a time, the main worry for the authorities came from building-workers, 50 of whom were arrested during a strike in 1836, and tailors who established semi-clandestine mutual aid societies and propagandized in inland towns in the west. The city was badly hit by the 1846–7 slump, with 10,000 workers – half the workforce – on poor relief. Adult male textile wages fell to 1 franc per day, barely one-third the level of the 1820s. Dr Guépin's surveys of life in the popular *quartiers* revealed levels of misery comparable with those of the factory textile towns. Over one-third of infants born there died before the age of one, a mortality rate four times as high as that in bourgeois districts. TB, rickets and chest diseases were endemic.

Despite this material deprivation, or because of it, combativity appeared largely confined to the skilled trades. Although some ex-SDH activists now joined Blanquist secret societies, leadership of the opposition stayed firmly in the hands of 'moderates'. Dr Guépin's selfless work as a slum doctor made him a respected

figure among Nantes workers. He showed sympathy with associationist ideas, but placed his weight behind electoral and educational reform and the avoidance of violence. Fear of the Catholic royalism united workers and middle-class Republicans in a common anti-clericalism. The Depression shook the faith of much of the city's middle class in the regime and led to open calls for reform. In February 1847 an editorial in the moderate *Courrier de Nantes* warned Guizot: 'Reform or Revolution it's up to you.' When Revolution came in February 1848, the terrified Orleanist elites turned to Guépin to use his influence to protect them against working-class militancy.

Agulhon's study of the southern naval-dockyard town of Toulon lays similar emphasis on the 'democratic patronage' exercised by the progressive wing of the middle class (Agulhon 1970). The town's rapid growth in the early part of the century, from 20,000 to 69,000, had generated the classic range of urban problems – overcrowding of older *quartiers*, high rents, lack of amenities in the expanding faubourgs. Private cleaning firms dumped excrement from the streets into streams which became open sewers. The workforce was highly diverse. The numbers employed in the naval dockyards grew by 150 per cent to 5,000 between 1815 and 1848. The naval garrison supplied a large market for a range of artisanal and food trades. A sizeable Italian sub-proletariat did casual labour and acted as the butt of local xenophobia.

Although some native Provençal workers remained patois-speaking, traditionalist and Catholic , Toulon – unlike its neighbour Marseilles – was a 'blue' city whose economy and bourgeoisie had benefited from the post–1789 expansion of the naval dockyards.

The first evidence of militancy emerged, predictably, amongst artisanal trades. Toulon gave birth to the dissident movement of young bakers who, in the aftermath of '1830', sought to democratize the *compagnonnages*. Tailors and shoe-makers fought to resist efforts of naval authorities to give orders to prison and convent labour. But the specificity of Toulon labour politics came from the new mood in the naval dockyards. Technological innovations increased the need for skilled metal-workers. In 1815 one in 16 of the labour force were in the metal trades, by 1848 one in three. Many of these were recruited from central and northern France. The new arrivals disrupted the cultural dominance of local Catholic carpenters and sail-makers in the yards – a hereditary, submissive workforce whose wives supplemented their low incomes by doing laundry for the garrison. By 1844 Longomazino, a metal-worker inspired by the visit of the feminist socialist Flora Tristan, established an illicit union which sought to cover the entire dockyard labour force. . . . Tristan had told her audience to be wary of accepting bourgeois leadership.

In 1845 the dockyard had its first major strike. Workers demanded not merely pay rises but a say in appointment of foremen, provision for aged workers and compensation for the loss of perks such as the right to take home wood chippings. Although the strike was defeated, in part because of the influence of the clergy over native carpenters, it marked a watershed in class relations in the city. The workers' bitterness in the aftermath was heightened by a scandal typical of Orleanism's waning years. An enquiry had been launched into accusations that officials

and private contractors had been conspiring together to misuse stocks of timber. A fire then destroyed the timber yard. Workers claimed that this was deliberate arson to destroy the evidence of corruption.

Agulhon discerns clear signs of the emergence of a new working-class culture. Pelabon, a dockyard foreman, wrote Provençal poems in which he expressed his devotion to traditional religion and culture, but lamented their rapid decline. The new fashion, he complained, was to write of a utopian future of equality and happiness. Popular songs, poems and plays began to flourish in the *guingettes* of the town outskirts. The most famous poet, later to be patronized by intellectuals like George Sand, was Charles Poncy. He was by no means a militant, disapproved of Flora Tristan and became increasingly centrist in his political views when he acquired a minor bureaucratic post. But his poems deal with social themes. His 'Chanson des tailleurs' lamented that those who devoted their lives to making clothes lacked the resources to buy them, and saw the answer in the 'organization of work'. He voiced popular resentment at Toulon's atrocious housing and public hygiene.

But the embryonic labour movement remained under the influence of the city's 'progressive' middle class – not merely lawyers and students but 'philanthropic' merchants like future Second Republic mayor Suchet. Some of the grande-école trained navel engineers were St Simonians. The flourishing masonic lodge – bastion of Republican anti-clericalism – actually recruited a few skilled workers. In 1846 Ortolan, a St Simonian, got over 40 per cent of the vote – even under the narrow franchise – by campaigning for government by the useful classes, railway links for the city and public works for improved urban amenities. A sizeable proportion of middle-class electors had approved a candidate who favoured social-liberalism and expressed humanitarian concern for workers. In Toulon, workers remained enmeshed in a wider anti-Orleanist movement.

And yet, well before the traumas of 1848, there were voices warning prophetically of the dangers to the young workers' movement of placing its faith in a bourgeois Republic. At a political banquet in 1840 the communist barber Rozier claimed:

> Those who exploit Revolutions call themselves our defenders in order to draw us into purely political reforms. However, cut off from social reform, political reform is an odious lie, because it preserves the old society – and with it the exploitation of man by man, because if the exploited wish to enjoy their political rights, the cruel exploiters will throw them out of work on to the streets, where they will be prey to destitution. As a result [the workers], if they are unwilling to abandon all human dignity . . . will take up arms. However, tyranny will be ever more dangerous – since it will be able to rely on an apparently democratic constitution in order to shoot [workers] down. Hence the unprincipled revolutionaries have held out a trap for human intelligence by proclaiming purely political reform – worried . . . as they . . . are by the truth and progress of communist principles.
>
> (Faure and Rancière 1976)

The events of 1848 were to vindicate Rozier's warnings, which had an uncanny accuracy. Rozier himself died in the workers' insurrection of June 1848 – mown down by the army of the Republic, commanded by a Republican general.

ECONOMIC CRISIS, POOR RELIEF, POPULAR PROTEST AND REPRESSION, 1845–1847

The economic depression of 1845–7 threatened not merely the stability of the regime but the very survival of capitalist hegemony. It provoked not only popular protest amongst broad strata of urban workers, rural out-workers, agricultural labourers and small-peasants but distress amongst much of the petty-bourgeoisie. Its severity was due to the overlapping of two distinct types of crisis. It was the last full-scale 'Labroussean' crisis of the type which had hit the economy in the late 1780s. Bad harvests led to high food prices and to reduced consumer spending on textiles and, hence, to industrial slump and unemployment. The budget deficit swelled as the government was forced to purchase overseas grain. At the same time there was a new-style capitalist crisis characterized by industrial over-production, credit shortages, liquidity problems and – by the late 1840s – problems in market agriculture as cash-crop producers were unable to sell bumper crops.

How can one characterize the popular response? Was it spontaneous, traditional, 'archaic'? Or was there discernible evidence of a political reaction amongst the working class? The answers to these questions may be distored by the fact that the food crisis was less acute in some key centres of artisanal radicalism. In Paris government intervention in the grain market kept price rises down. Marseilles and Lyon lay in a region of France supplied by grain imports from the Black Sea. Hence industrial areas where the food situation was most serious tended to be those in which the labour movement was less well developed.

As R. Price shows, the internal transport remained a major obstacle to the supply of deficit areas (Price 1983a). Under 2,000 kilometres of railway had been completed – and the crisis halted construction on several new lines. Despite recent road and canal construction projects, transport remained slow and erratic in many regions. Rivers froze in winter, became torrents in the spring as ice melted, dried up in summer. Localized grain shortages could occur and very wide localized price variations. In 1846–7 grain prices were 33 per cent higher in the Nord than in the Vaucluse. A wide area around Paris concentrated on producing foodstuffs for the capital's 1.4 million inhabitants. But this left adjacent grain-deficit areas – the Cher, the northern Massif, wine-growing parts of Burgundy – in danger of famine.

During 1846–7 northern textile workers were forced to spend up to 50 per cent of their reduced wages on bread. Indeed at the peak of the food shortage many were unemployed. Mortality rates soared. Digestive diseases and protein and vitamin deficiencies were widespread. Months of under-nourishment generated psychological misery and exhaustion. Jobless urban spinners and weavers tramped the countryside in search of food – whilst rural out-workers drifted to towns in the quest for charity. One quantitative study of French crime has shown that in 1846–7 there was the strongest correlation of the entire nineteenth century between high food prices and rates of petty crime (vagrancy, theft) (Zehr 1976).

Much popular reaction to the crisis recalled that of 1787–9. 'Hoarders' were accused of withholding grain from market to keep up prices. Bakeries had to be fortified against rioters who claimed that their owners were adulterating flour. Communities became paranoid about export of grain from their areas. The authori-

ties lamented this 'irrational' hysteria with its 'fossilized' memories of distant famines, but could take comfort in the fact that popular anger was often personalized, directed against individual millers or grain-merchants rather than against the 'system'. Nevertheless, liberal economists complained that the ignorant poor failed to appreciate the wonders of the free market and yearned nostalgically for paternalistic dirigisme. In contrast, socialists were saddened by the tendency of workers and peasants to blame greedy individuals rather then the market system itself.

Much of the rhetoric of protest recalls the blood-curdling invective lovingly detailed by Richard Cobb for the Revolutionary period. Graffiti and placards threatened the rich with the gallows. And at markets, the obvious flashpoints, women led demonstrations to force sale at a 'just price'. Loiret boat-men attacked grain convoys on the canals. Forestry workers at Pierrefonds (Oise) intimidated the mayor into intervening to lower the market price of grain.

What political content did such activities have? In the Doubs police reported reassuringly that 'the question of grain dominates all others [but] the spirit of party restrains itself in the face of such calamities'. This was not necessarily typical. In the Catholic-royalist west protesters sometimes contrasted the relative humaneness of the nobles with the ruthless attitude of 'bourgeois monsters' towards the poor. But Legitimist notables were too wary of uncontrollable popular violence to play the sorcerer's apprentice and encourage the genie to come out of the bottle, however much they hated the regime. Elsewhere, protesters invoked the Jacobin tradition. At Chateaudun (Eure-et-Loire) a wall poster proclaimed: 'Long live the Republic; people awaken to exterminate the race of Kings. You will not be happy til you have overthrown the bourgeoisie . . . who govern us and make us die of hunger.' At Dijon a National Guard officer controlling the crowd was greeted with 'Down with the bourgeoisie! We want your country mansion.' After incidents in Buzençais in which three men were sentenced to death after the killing of a grain-merchant and a 'usurer', the liberal paper *Le Siècle* reported the shouting of 'communist' slogans and threats to march on Paris. 'Whereas the poor class formerly looked for support to the bourgeoisie, today it is the bourgeoisie which it attacks. They no longer say 'war on the châteaux' They say 'Kill the bourgeoisie!' The defence lawyer in the trial was to become a socialist deputy in 1849.

Cholet weavers and Cher miners marched en masse to release colleagues jailed for food riots. Wood-men, clog-makers, and boat-men arrested for attacks on grain barges heading for Paris on the Orleans canal had strong community support. Witnesses refused to testify against them. In proto-industrial or industrial communities there remained a notion of the 'moral economy' and of a 'just price'. Once could view such ideas as irredeemably anachronistic or as an instinctive rejection of the free market which could be the basis of a populist 'socialism'.

The regions most affected by these disorders were food 'deficit' parts of north-central France (Cher; Burgundy; Northern Massif; Berry), the 'secondary' grain supply zones on the outer rim of the region which supplied Paris, textile areas of northern France, and parts of the west. The sociological composition of those involved included wine-growers, agricultural labourers, textile out-workers, forestry-workers. Miners rioted in Blanzy, quarry-men in parts of the west. Dockers at channel ports refused to handle grain exports. Rail navvies were a source of

headaches for the authorities. Textile towns were highly volatile. In Lille 84 bakeries were attacked. There were riots in Troyes and at Mulhouse – where troops killed eight rioters.

Orleanist authorities and *notables* sought to temper repression with poor relief gestures (Price 1983b). The severity of the crisis exposed the inadequacies of the patchwork system of communal welfare and private charitable provision. Both 'liberals' and social-Catholics shared, in practice, a similar attitude to welfare. The latter argued that inequality was God-given, that socialist calls for redistribution of wealth were blasphemous, but that charity was the duty of christian elites. Liberals argued that since the wages of the poor were fixed by the laws of supply and demand it was futile to wring one's hands about 'low wages'. The poor had the remedy largely in their own hands – through sobriety and thrift. But, in practice, liberals tempered this ideology with acceptance of private charity which had the advantage of highlighting the subordination of grateful recipients. The poor had no right to expect relief for, as Thiers told a parliamentary commission in 1850, 'If the entire class, instead of receiving, felt able to make demands, it would assume the role of a beggar who begs gun in hand.'

However, on grounds of simple pragmatism the elites felt forced to infringe the laws of the market in 1846–7. Nine million francs were spent to subsidize bakeries in Paris. Police tried to calm consumers by checking for fraudulent weights at food shops. Tariffs on food imports were cut. Urban municipalities in deficit areas were empowered to spend money on grain purchases. But despite the manifest inadequacy of municipal *bureaux de bienfaisance* – welfare committees run and largely financed by local notables – there was a reluctance to move towards systematic state provision which, it was argued, would be against free-market principles, encourage the workers to view relief as their right, and be costly to bourgeois taxpayers. Nevertheless, expenditure on welfare rose from an average of 10 million francs per year in 1838–47 to 20 million francs in 1847.

In Paris in 1847 300,000 people received bread coupons at some stage. These included many more than just the city's subproletariat. Prefect Husson was later to estimate that those in receipt of relief included not only 72,000 'without a trade' and 46,000 day-labourers but also 18,800 cabinet-makers, 10.400 locksmiths and tens of thousands from other skilled crafts. In the Nord nearly one in four of the population were on relief – though only one in 10 in Lyon, where grain prices were lower. Semi-rural workers (quarry-men; wood-men) fared worse than urban industrial workers since their small communes often had no *bureaux de bienfaisance.*

The system remained patchy, haphazard, subject to the generosity of the rich or the whims of those in authority. In some towns *notables* banded together to purchase grain for the poor – textile masters in the Nord, coal companies. But such benevolence did not always produce the expected deferential gratitude. At a trial in Chinon the defence lawyer reported meeting the accused in the market hall. 'He was very animated. He told me that at the moment meal-tickets were being distributed to workers . . . but that he was too pround to hold out his hand, that it was necessary that all that type of thing was done away with.' At Lunéville (Meurthe) posters described the charity ball of 'rich grain merchants' as an 'insult to the poor'. At Clamécy, stronghold of the militant Yonne river wood-floaters, a

placard in August 1846 began: 'You keep the poor miserable. . . . Beware our anger, the thunder will fall upon you. . . . You will pay for your vile actions. For it is horrible to pay so much for your grain. You will dance at the Ball only once.'

The elites saw such ingratitude as a sign of the times, as subversive doctrines seduced the poor from habitual deference. But clearly the levels of relief dispensed were inadequate to the severity of the crisis. Financial resources of municipalities were too slight to afford extensive public-works projects. At Poitiers workers employed on a council road scheme were paid 1 franc per day – and expected to supply their own tools. At Le Mans the mayor resigned when the prefect vetoed a relief scheme.

In the last report the state turned to repression (Price 1982). It was hampered by the sympathy of some local authorities for their inhabitants' grievances. At Cholet textile weavers protests were condoned by the mayor, for 'natural law permits people to take what they need to eat when they are hungry'. Mayors in forest communes of the Loiret were intimidated by wood-men into refusing to cooperate with the police. The 20,000 paramilitary gendarmes could not be everywhere at once and on some occasions, as at Bourges (Cher), their patrol commanders sought to defuse dangerous situations by pushing down prices. At Mulhouse in 1847 the citizens' militia, the National Guard, simply refused to act against the rioters whether from latent sympathy or fear of reprisal. In the Indre, National Guards said they would protect only merchants who cut grain prices!

When all else failed – as it frequently did – the army could shoot protesters as in Lille, Mulhouse, Rheims, Troyes, Nancy, Chateauroux. It was forced to patrol highways, canals, rivers and to keep suspect communities such as quarry-workers under surveillance. The Seine was garrisoned by 29,000 troops; the Rhône, the Nord and the Bouches du Rhône by 10,000. But use of troops did little to prop up the crumbling legitimacy of the regime – not only in the eyes of workers but, crucially, in the eyes of many of the middle class.

The eagerness of the regime to subsidize big-city food prices meant that the brunt of the food crisis fell not on artisans but on such workers as textile outworkers, quarry and forest-men, miners, whose levels of political consciousness were less sophisticated. Yet, even so, their language linked the old rhetoric of the 'moral economy' with crude, bluntly expressed denunciation of the bourgeoisie and of the Orleanist regime.

It is not the thesis of this section to claim that the subsistence crisis in itself posed a direct challenge to the hegemony of the Orleanist elites. Food riots rarely undermine established ruling classes. However, the sheer scale of the distress and of popular protest – albeit of a generally unorganized, inchoate and 'unpolitical' nature – sapped the self-confidence of the regime and increased its vulnerability to Republican and working-class critics who were questioning its legitimacy.

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Part II

The Artisan Republic

1

Workers and the Second Republic: Mobilization and Demobilization

As opponents of the Orleanist oligarchy came to despair of political change under the existing electoral system, they mounted a campaign of reform banquets. Many of these were decorous affairs, dominated by moderates and directed towards the non-enfranchized sectors of the middle-class. A few, however, were staged by radicals, charged lower fees and attracted working-class participation. On 24 February 1848 Parisian workers' street protests at the banning of an electoral banquet escalated within hours into an insurrection which swept away the regime. Petty-bourgeois National Guards, called out to control the crowds, refused to restore 'order' since they sympathized with the reformers' demands. Troops who were summoned to Paris refused to fire on middle-class crowds. A regime born from one popular Parisian street revolt melted away in the face of another.

Even observers who had predicted revolution were amazed at the accuracy of their own prophecies. Neither Republicans nor socialist militants had planned a revolt. But the immediate outcome appeared very different from that of 1830. Then politically immature and unorganized workers had allowed the fruits of their barricade triumph to be appropriated by the sophisticated anti-Bourbon elites. That experience taught workers a lesson. Workers in the streets in February 1848 demanded universal (male) suffrage and a Republic. Furthermore they forced the middle-class Republicans who assembled a hastily improvized provisional government to include Louis Blanc in it, and to guarantee the 'right to work'. Obviously a vanguard of Parisian workers had understood the distinction made by socialist propagandists between a purely 'formal' and a 'social' Republic. On 17 March workers demonstrated against attempts to exclude them from the capital's National Guard.

These working-class concerns were given crucial relevance within days of the February rising. Political uncertainty undermined the recent, still fragile, economic revival by shattering business confidence. Investment faltered. By March some 60 per cent of Paris's 340,000 workers were unemployed (Markovitch 1965). Economic crisis hit government tax receipts and worsened the budget deficit. The Provisional Government resisted workers' calls for a Ministry of Labour and for state aid for cooperatives, but it had to appear to offer some alternative concessions

to mobilized and volatile workers in the streets. It set up 'National Workshops'. The name was intended to evoke Blanc's 'social workshops', but in practice they were rather like the old *ateliers de charité*, offering low-paid navvying jobs for the unemployed. Similar projects emerged in other towns.

In place of a Labour Ministry workers were offered the palliative of the Luxembourg Commission, at which elected delegates from the trades were to debate their industries' problems. Whilst some dismissed this as an impotent talking-shop, lacking real power, others saw its potential as a focus for coordinated working-class action, which, hopefully, could transcend craft divisions. Certainly Luxembourg activists came to denounce the National Workshops as merely 'outdoor relief', a betrayal of skilled workers' justified claims for employment in their own trades. They also argued that workers had to organize to secure their own emancipation from the wage system, criticized Blanc's naive faith in his cabinet colleagues and sought to promote producer cooperatives.

Inevitably levels of political mobilization in provincial France varied widely (Fasel 1972). In some towns bourgeois notables – such as Dr Guépin in Nantes – or Cabetists, as in Rheims or Vienne, sought to defuse social tensions by urging workers to collaborate with the progressive bourgeoisie. But in Toulouse, Toulon and Limoges there were conflicts over workers' access to the National Guard. In towns with sizeable craft sectors – Limoges, Lyon, Marseilles – artisans demanded financial aid for producer cooperatives and for public works as alternatives to 'degrading' navvying jobs in national workshops. But financial restrictions forced the Marseilles municipality to abandon its plans for job creation via port renewal projects (Christofferson 1980). Lyon, predictably, was the most 'advanced' provincial city. Its silk industry was hit by the slump and its weaver activists, led by J. Benoît, sought to channel widespread popular unrest towards political clubs – 167 were set up – and into electoral organization rather than into violence and Luddism.

In Paris a similar movement claimed 75,000 members in around 200 clubs at its peak (Amann 1975). These made determined efforts to mobilize the newly enfranchized working-class electorate. These clubs have had a bad press. Many contemporary commentators and subsequent historians, echoing the portrait of them in Flaubert's novel *Sentimental Education*, described them as noisy, disorderly gatherings of the ill-smelling unwashed, doctrinal Babels in which a profusion of absurd, messianic aspirations were voiced by semi-educated fanatics preaching communism, vegetarianism and female emancipation. In fact much of their activity was pragmatic. They were attempting to offer a necessary crash-course in political education for the city's poor. They succeeded in registering some three-quarters of Parisians for the election. They popularized key socialist slogans, including the emphasis on the need for a 'Social Republic'. In a de facto situation of 'dual power' in the capital during the spring they were the nearest approach to a French Soviet. Unlike the more blinkered of the supporters of cooperatives they showed a keen awareness that any successful working-class revolution would have to grapple with the issue of state power. Their success was, however, limited. Police agents astutely furnished fraudulent evidence that Blanqui, one of the key club orators and organizers, was a police spy – thereby fomenting an ongoing personal feud between him and his rival Barbès. They were too chaotic and cumbersome

to play the role of an effective party. And they put forward too many obscure election candidates – an error compounded by their failure to coordinate their efforts with those of the Luxembourg which offered its own list of 20 candidates drawn from key trades. Only one of the latter was to be victorious in April. The clubs at least showed an awareness that Paris was not France. But the 250 activists whom they sent to spread the good word to the provinces proved, in the main, no match for the entrenched local influence of landed notables in rural and small town France.

The election was a predictable disaster for the left. The moderate Republicans of the Provisional Government, faced with a budget deficit, had increased the land tax by 45 per cent rather than opting for the radicals' strategy of progressive income tax – which, they feared, would alienate the Bank of France on whose goodwill they relied for credit. Not for the last time in French history a 'progressive' government brought into power as a result of popular hatred of the financial oligarchy found itself a prisoner of the same oligarchs. The land tax, by turning the peasantry against the Republicans, played straight into the hands of the hitherto panic-stricken elites. They could now focus the resentments of the crisis-hit peasantry against an 'urban' tax raised to keep 'socialist' workers in the pampered idleness to which they aspired to be allowed to grow accustomed. The Blanquists, aware of the need to 'educate' the rural electorate, held demonstrations to try to get the elections postponed.

The left did well in some urban centres but made little impact in peasant France. Lyon emerged as the 'red' capital. In Paris the profusion of obscure worker candidates split the left's vote, and only six of 34 seats were won. In two working-class strongholds – Rouen and Limoges – the frustration of workers at losing electoral contests because of the votes of the surrounding peasantry led to outbursts of violence (Merriman 1974). In Limoges troops were sent to occupy the town and cow the porcelain workers. In Rouen, where the bourgeoisie had already denounced the cost of national workshops for 7,5000 unemployed, 39 died in clashes with troops.

In all, 500 neo-royalists were elected, 200 moderate Republicans and around 100 Radicals – including some workers. The atmosphere in working-class areas became increasingly tense. Club membership began to fall away. An ill-planned and abortive popular demonstration on 16 May against the Assembly building gave the government a chance to claim that the left had been attempting a coup. Club records were seized, the Luxembourg Commission disbanded and Blanqui, who been biding his time until workers became thoroughly disillusioned with the new regime before attempting a coup, was arrested (Denholm 1979).

By late May prominent conservatives were becoming convinced that the socialist menace could only be 'stopped all at once by a great battle' (De Tocqueville). Elated by electoral victory they were convinced that they could provoke the workers into a suicidal rising which would justify outright repression, thereby exorcizing once and for all the spectre of insolent socialist scroungers idling on Parisian street corners and discussing their plans to overturn society whilst living at the taxpayer's expense. By the time the left made gains in by-elections in Paris in early June plans were underway to close down the National Workshops and offer the unem-

ployed the choice of joining the Army, draining malaria-infested marshes in the Sologne or accepting low-paid casual jobs with Paris entrepreneurs (McKay 1933). Activists from the dissolved Luxembourg Commission and from the workshops combined to issue a call for a 'social Republic'. Troops were brought into the city and, together with National Guards from the city and the provinces and the Gardes Mobiles – a paramilitary force recruited from the city's unemployed – savagely suppressed the expected insurrection of some 50,000 Parisian workers (23 June). Of these, 1,500 were killed and 12,000 arrested. Although recent research has offered a nuanced sociological analysis of the two sides in this savage battle it cannot disguise the fact, obvious to contemporaries as far apart politically as Marx and de Tocqueville, that this had been a naked class war. The insurgents' proclaimed goal, a 'social' Republic guaranteeing basic rights to dignity and work, was perceived by their conquerors as a fundamental threat to bourgeois order.

In *Sentimental Education* Flaubert was later to paint a graphic portrait of the savage reprisals taken by the victors, including summary execution of prisoners by bourgeois National Guards. Flaubert, by no means a man of the left, commented that, since property was now the only real religion of bourgeois society, the insurgents were atheists and their massacre perceived as a 'justifiable' act in a holy war.

The June insurrection was largely an act of desperation by the Parisian unemployed, lacking any clear strategic goals. It left the neo-Jacobin radicals – the Montagnards – trapped as impotent, anguished observers of the carnage (McPhee 1975). They were mainly journalists, doctors, lawyers – often veterans of Orleanist jails. As democrats they could not support an insurrection against an elected government, however reactionary. But they sympathized with workers' aspirations for a 'social' Republic which would shield 'little men' – peasants and small businessmen as well as workers – against the capitalist oligarchy. In the aftermath of the rising they began to organize a broad-left coalition which might stand a chance in future elections. In the meantime they urged workers not to be provoked into further, counter-productive violence.

In the second half of 1848 the government was headed by General Cavaignac, the 'butcher of June' who had put his Algerian colonial experiences to good use in crushing the insurrection. He was a Republican by family tradition, and he encouraged his ministers to finance public works schemes and cooperative ventures (Luna 1969). But the hands of reformers in the government were tied by the rightist assembly majority which, led by Thiers, was determined to capitalize fully on the insurgents' defeat. Clubs were closed down, socialists like Blanc prosecuted, radical newspapers censored. Many captured insurgents were deported to Algeria.

In the December 1848 elections the enigmatic Louis Napoleon easily defeated Cavaignac for the presidency. The working-class electorate was hopelessly split. In some of less politicized towns unsophisticated workers voted for Cavaignac as the Republican candidate. Amongst workers who rejected Cavaignac as the 'June butcher' a sizeable minority voted for the radical Ledru-Rollin, a handful for Raspail, including an ultra-left vanguard who felt that the workers had been betrayed by the Montagnards and should carve out their own independent political party. But many voted for Louis Napoleon – whose propaganda shrewdly evoked the populist strain in the Bonapartist legend by portraying him as nephew of the

'people's Emperor' genuinely committed to social reform. Similarly, many of the peasants whose votes were decisive in his election viewed him as the champion of cheap rural credit, opponent of the wine taxes and the forest codes and the land tax and protector against the notables and the usurers.

In the unfavourable climate of repression after June one refuge for the labour vanguard lay in a 'retreat' into the associationist producer and consumer cooperative movement which had already been encouraged by the Luxembourg delegates. The associationist movement was eclectic and ideologically heterogeneous. Some of the craft-elite around *L'Atelier*, who had kept aloof from the June Days, were wooed by Cavaignac as moderates who would go along with schemes for joint worker-employer ventures or for small-scale individualistic cooperatives which would distribute dividends and compete with each other in the market. Proudhonists sought to keep aloof both from such flirtation with government but also from 'politics' altogether – emphasizing that workers' social salvation lay through apolitical mutualism. Others argued that this strategy would lead the labour movement into a cul-de-sac. State power could not, somehow, be wished away as if it did not exist – as incessant police harassment of cooperative ventures made clear. They, thus, argued that associationism had to be linked with continued political attempts to establish a 'Social and Democratic Republic' which would, once in power, encourage the cooperative movement.

It was the Démocrate Socialiste (Dem Soc) movement which from early 1849 onwards provided the main thrust behind attempts to achieve this goal (Berenson 1984). Led by bourgeois Montagnards it succeeded – in the face of bureaucratic and police persecution – in building up something which approximated to a national political organization. It had broad support from workers, artisans, urban petty-bourgeois and from peasant proprietors in central, eastern and southern France. It managed to achieve a surprisingly creditable result in the May 1849 parliamentary elections – winning over 36 per cent of the vote, against just over 50 per cent for the right and 11 per cent for the moderate Republicans. It then proceeded to win by-elections in the following months – raising the possibility, in the minds of worried conservatives, that 'socialism' might triumph via the ballot box in the next round of presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for 1852.

The Dem-Socs' most spectacular gains were, in fact, in the countryside. Here they succeeded in tapping the grievances of small cash-crop peasant producers hit by the continued collapse of agricultural prices and often in debt to 'usurers'. Many had voted Bonapartist in December 1848, but had subsequently become disillusioned when Louis Napoleon appointed neo-royalist ministers and failed to carry out his promises on wine and land tax abolition and rural credit.

Urban workers played an important, but subordinate, role in the movement. They gave it solid electoral support in the predictable centres of radicalism and, in general, accepted that the Montagnard leadership were genuinely committed to the ideals of an 'associationist Republic'. However, some worker activists were wary of accepting bourgeois leadership and sceptical of the long-term efficacy of their electoralist strategy in the face of sustained bureaucratic repression and the ever-growing threat that the Bonapartists might stage a pre-emptive coup rather than run the risk of seeing leftist electoral victory in 1852. A law of May 1850

disenfranchizing voters who had no settled residence or who had any 'criminal' record – in all some 30 per cent of the electorate – made prospects of accession to power via the ballot box more remote.

During 1849–51 the main focus of the political battle appeared to switch to the countryside as the Dem-Socs struggled to maintain their new-found peasant support. The relative quiescence of the industrial towns stemmed in part from the intimidatory presence of troops and prying police agents. But it may also have been due to a real, if limited and fragile, recovery in the industrial economy. Unemployment fell in the Nord. Good harvests and low crop prices which spelled disaster for sections of the peasantry ensured lower food prices. Urban death rates fell – despite a brief return of cholera in 1849. The Paris building trade revived. Possibly these were the first signs of a new cyclical capitalist boom which would herald the end of Marx's immediate hopes for European revolution. But in France the revival was a fragile affair, with alarm about the 1852 elections sapping business confidence. The Bonapartist coup of 2 December 1851 ended such fears, and triggered a stock exchange boom.

Heavily garrisoned cities offered little resistance to the coup, despite some barricade fighting in eastern Paris. Lyon workers awoke to find artillery trained on the Croix-Rousse. Sadly for the popular movement the peak of specifically working-class mobilization had come in 1848, and been crushed in the June Days. Thereafter, despite the vitality of the cooperatives and the commendable efforts of the Dem-Soc movement, the urban labour movement was always on the defensive. Activists were forced to confront the obvious sense of defeatism, cynicism and apathy amongst fellow workers. In the spring of 1848 the radical cartoonist Daumier portrayed a fat bourgeois incredulously eyeing a worker who was reading a political newspaper. Two years later in his cartoons workers sit on a wall making cynical comments to the effect that all politicians are idlers who enter parliament to grab sinecures (Clark 1973).

Ironically, the peasantry, whose votes in April and December 1848 had done so much to undermine workers' aspirations for a democratically elected social Republic, now made belated efforts to make amends. In villages and *bourgs* of central and southern France tens of thousands of peasants and rural artisans – organized by a secret society network linked to the Dem-Socs, made a desperate attempt to resist the coup and to salvage their own dream of a 'social and democratic Republic' – of a world without forest guards, usurers, tax officials. They lost heart once they discovered that the left's industrial heartlands had already surrendered.

INTERPRETING THE SECOND REPUBLIC: A CRISIS OF CAPITALIST HEGEMONY?

Paradoxically, Karl Marx is responsible for one of the standard dismissive appraisals of the popular mobilization of the Second Republic. In the *Communist Manifesto*, which appeared on the eve of the February 1848 upheavals, he had claimed that in modern Europe the state had become the ruling executive of the capitalist elite and that the coming revolution would essentially resolve itself into a battle between

the capitalist class and its proletarian adversaries – though the latter would have subordinate allies amongst the intermediate strata threatened by the spread of the capitalist economy. But by the time he wrote the *The Eighteenth Brumaire* in 1852 – to explain the defeat of revolution – Marx had nuanced his analysis in significant ways. The industrial revolution in France was, he admitted, only in its infancy. The 'ruling class' was, thus, not a homogeneous industrial bourgeoisie but a 'ruling bloc', fragmented between rival interests of aristocratic land-owners, agrarian capitalists, financiers, merchants, industrialists and the liberal professions. Similarly, the subordinate classes included not merely the proletariat but also the sizeable remnants of the artisanate, the petty-bourgeoisie and the peasantry. Divisions within the ruling bloc had allowed the revolution of February to occur.

But the working-class vanguard was too small to seize power and went down, isolated, to heroic defeat in the June Days. Thereafter it could play only a subordinate role, as leadership of the left fell to the bourgeois-led Dem-Socs whose 'utopian' dream was to defend the interests of its historically doomed peasant and artisan petty-producer followers against the inexorable growth of the capitalist economy. Their movement was thus a fundamentally flawed social and political coalition of disparate groups wedded to a utopian dream of a cooperative, associationist Republic to be achieved through peaceful, electoral tactics – a 'parliamentary cretinist' illusion. Thus, according to Marx's considered reinterpretation, France was as yet 'unripe' for genuine revolution. With the industrial proletariat confined to a few islands of advanced capitalist production any proletarian solo-song was doomed to be a swan-song. The economic crisis of 1845–7 which had launched Europe-wide upheavals had proved to be part of the birth-pangs rather than of the death throes of industrial capitalism. The economic upturn of 1849 marked the first step to a new stage of capitalist re-stabilization and expansion. Working-class revolution remained on the agenda – but it would come only once further industrialization had created a larger, more mature proletariat (Marx 1973).

The recent historiography of the crisis of mid-century France remains indebted to Marx's analytical insights, whilst questioning some of his assumptions. Some historians have suggested that the Second Republic's significance lay in the way in which it served to accelerate the process of 'modernization' of the repertoire of French popular protest. Much of the popular mobilization of the 1815–48 period – rural as well as urban – still had an 'archaic' character. It was marked by machine-breaking, tax riots, grain protests, forest invasions, *charivaris*. Many of these modes of action, it is true, persisted into the 1848–51 period. But the significant focus of popular activism began to shift towards electoral politics, with the organization of political clubs and of embryonic national political parties, towards trade-unions and strikes. There were, thus, recognizably 'modern' forms of political and industrial activity – even if in the last resort, bureaucratic repression finally pushed the popular movement back into 'archaic' insurrectionary behaviour. But for a time, to use the jargon of modernization theory, French workers had moved from 'reactive' to 'proactive' radicalism (Tilly 1972).

Another possible approach involves a direct challenge to Marx's assumption that successful revolution must correlate with the emergence of an authentic industrial proletariat. Since European and world history from 1850 to the 1980s is not exactly

over-endowed with examples of triumphant seizures of power by the industrial working class some analysts have suggested that the most fertile conditions for popular anti-capitalist revolt may actually be found when there exists a volatile mix of industrial workers, threatened craftsmen and indebted small-peasants such as occurred in France in 1848. Craig Calhoun has argued that these latter two groups view with horror the emergence of industrial capitalism (Calhoun 1983). But in the period before it has achieved its definitive triumph they still perceive that triumph as something which can, possibly, be delayed, even avoided. Their own experiences of workshop production and of peasant farming allow them to actually envisage an alternative mode of production and way of life – which 'cooperation' might enable them to preserve. Hence in a crisis such as 1848–51 such groups of 'reactionary radicals' may prove more militant than industrial proletarians of coal-mine, textile factory and iron foundry who have come to regard large-scale industrial capitalism as a 'given', unavoidable fact. Hence, it might be argued, the Dem-Soc movement represented the most coherent attempt possible to build a national political organization which could mobilize the largest coalition of disaffected groups. It offered a plausible programme which met the real needs and aspirations of its popular supporters.

Thus one could argue both that the Second Republic represented a genuine crisis of bourgeois hegemony, but not of the type envisaged by the Communist Manifesto *and* that the restoration of 'order' in December 1851 required a level of military and bureaucratic coercion which illustrated the chronic inability of France's post-Revolutionary elite(s) to rule by consent and to make their values hegemonic. Why did they prove incapable of – or unwilling to – emulate their English counterparts by buying off popular opposition through gradual , piecemeal political and economic concessions? (Aminzade 1981).

1 France's relatively weak international economic position, in particular vis-à-vis Britain, made tight control of wages appear essential and precluded any concessions to trade-unionism. In addition, the importance of quality consumer goods to French exports made cost-cutting difficult, since these industries were labour-intensive and reliant on skilled workers.

2 There was an obvious problem of political legitimacy. Political hegemony, to be effective, requires the state to appear to be relatively 'neutral' in its arbitration of industrial conflicts. The Orleanist state was too obviously dependent on a propertied electorate and dedicated to their narrow interests to achieve this. Hence French workers won the extension of the franchize not by peaceful petitions but via insurrection. The popular classes had, however, won the vote in the midst of a major economic crisis. The Republican administrations of 1848 then pursued regressive fiscal policies and inadequate welfare policies which pushed Parisian workers into revolt. The brutal repression of the June Days restored 'order' – but only at the price of confirming the perception of many workers that the state machine was – even in a formally 'democratic' Republic – still the tool of the rich. Hence the advent of mass suffrage in 1848 merely served to spread class conflict into the electoral arena rather than to defuse class tensions.

3 There were also idelogical barriers to bourgeois hegemony. The bourgeoisie did, of course, have at hand a potential weapon of ideological legitimacy in the

universalist rhetoric of the rights of man, and in the Jacobin synthesis between bourgeois individualism, social welfarism, egalitarianism and Republican nationalism. But the distaste of most of the elite for this heritage made its manipulation to win worker support problematical. The elites remained too fragmented by economic interests and by political, religious and cultural heritage to appreciate that shrewd tactical espousal of Republicanism could, by co-opting a section of the working class – and the peasantry – serve to strengthen bourgeois dominance by providing a degree of democratic legitimacy. But what became feasible, as Sanford Elwitt has shown, in a period of relative economic stability in the 1870s was not really feasible amidst economic and social crisis in 1848, when any concession to the mobilized and menacing popular classes was viewed as a step to the abolition of private property (Elwitt 1975).

Elite fears were heightened by the obvious strengths of a vigorous working-class counter-culture and, then, by the Dem-Socs' attempt to construct a national coalition of workers, petty-bourgeois and peasants. Despite the weaknesses of this movement – its failure to break the hold of conservative notables in most of northern and western France; the fact that the working class was still a minority class, and one fragmented by locality, craft, sex, age and cultural tradition; the populist appeal of the Bonapartist myth; – the elites failed to reassert their control through the 'normal' methods of manipulation of religion, education, press, patronage and paternalism. In the last resort they were forced – like their counterparts in Italy in the early 1920s and in Germany in the early 1930s – to abandon their direct control of politics and turn to an 'autonomous', authoritarian dictatorship which could rule in the general interests of French capitalism whilst free of the direct control of capitalists.

But this resort to state repression confirmed the view of politically conscious workers that the state was an instrument of the ruling class. Here lies one explanation for the subsequent obstinate refusal of sections of the French labour movement to adapt to the reformist gradualism of labourism.

Universal suffrage was, thus, won via popular insurrection in the midst of a severe socio-economic crisis which posed structural threats to both peasant and artisanal petty production. Instead of legitimizing bourgeois rule it simply served, in these circumstances, to politicize already high levels of social grievance and, thus, to extend populist anti-capitalism into the electoral arena. And although the Dem-Soc movement was repressed, it left a legacy. The electoral map of the Popular Front victory at the polls in 1936 correlates closely with that of radical voting patterns in 1849.

What, then, were the most significant features of the popular mobilization of the Second Republic? Should one lay emphasis on the theme of the 'Artisan Republic', seeing the real heart of popular radicalism in attempts of skilled workers to resist the advent of industrial capitalism by creating an associationist Republic which could nurture producer cooperatives? Or is this too narrow an interpretation, both because it omits the role of groups other than male craftsmen – women, factory-workers, miners, peasants, rural out-workers – and because it fails to give sufficient emphasis on the wider political significance of the Dem-Soc movement as an embryonic national political party of the broad left?

2

Cooperatives and Class War

The diversity of labour protest in Paris in 1848 makes analysis of the sociology of worker activists and of their aspirations, goals and strategies extremely problematic. After the February insurrection overthrew the Orleanist regime workers' pressure on the streets succeeded in imposing universal male suffrage and the promise of the 'right to work'. Denied a 'Ministry of Labour', workers nevertheless sought to utilize the Luxembourg Commission, offered to them as a sop, to achieve reforms in the workplace and to coordinate a vigorous cooperative movement. During the April elections the club movement made valiant efforts to register and mobilize working-class voters. The provisional government in its attempts to control and discipline the unemployed, was obliged to provide more than 100,000 places in the National Workshops – whose fate, however, was sealed once the revitalized right won the national elections, since workers in them had not proved to be the grateful, and orderly creatives envisaged by the scheme's founders. The dissolution of the workshops proved the catalyst which provoked the fateful June Days insurrection.

Analysis of participants in the February and June risings offers one possible approach to understanding Parisian protest. Of these two events the former has attracted less attention, since it provoked too little resistance to be dramatic and, because of the sympathy of strata of the bourgeoisie for the reform movement, fighting did not degenerate into naked class warfare (Traugott 1988). Because the rising was a 'success', the insurgents were not subject to mass arrests, hence depriving historians of the judicial records generated by failed protests. In their absence, the best evidence comes from records of a compensation commission established to provide financial aid to those injured in the fighting or to relatives of those killed. From these Traugott has analysed the cases of 473 participants. Of the 416 whose age is known, 9.1 per cent were under 20, 56.5 per cent between 20 and 39. Ninety-nine per cent were male, 60 per cent were married, nearly 70 per cent were born outside the Paris region. The 'typical' February insurgent emerges as male, married with children, aged 35, provincial born and with, at best, primary education. Above all, and predictably, he was likely to have been drawn from the skilled trades. Building, metal, clothing, printing all provided a greater percentage of participants than their relative weight in the labour force might suggest. Furniture and fancy-goods trades had a lower involvement, whilst the participation rate of the city's expanding 'proletarian' sectors was very low. Chemical

workers, 3.2 per cent of the Parisian labour force, made up 0.4 per cent of known insurgents.

The composition of the crowd, with its predominance of 'artisans' – augmented by a few clerks and professional bourgeois – thus echoes that of the risings of the early 1830s, analysed by Pinkney. As in 1830, the rising occurred in the aftermath of an economic slump, but as the economy was beginning to pick up. In both cases violence was triggered by an act of government political provocation. Neither can plausibly be viewed as risings of hunger and in neither case did the very poor, the casual labourers and the underclass play a significant role. One could, of course, make the cynical suggestion that a successful revolt, which founds a new regime, is unlikely to generate police or judicial records hinting that those who fought to establish it were an unemployed, criminal underclass! This contrasts sharply with the situation in 1871 when the victorious forces of order sought to brand defeated Communards as alcoholic, criminal dregs.

The February crowd was, however, older than that of 1830. One in seven had been involved in previous risings in the city – and 10 per cent were to be involved in subsequent ones. This raises the possibility that one is dealing with a 'revolutionary generational cohort' who, with memories of the 1830s, had come to view insurrection as a logical effective way to seek change.

The arrest of 11,000 suspects after the June Days offers a more substantial statistical basis for sociological analysis (Tilly and Lees 1975; Price 1972; Rudé 1964). Though, on balance, the data does offer qualified support to the 'radical artisan' thesis it requires careful handling. It is not clear from the documentation whether an *ouvrier* is a journeyman or a small-master. Also it is obvious that in the aftermath of the insurrection the forces of order made many arrests 'on suspicion', irrespective of the existence of direct evidence of involvement. Hence the pattern of arrests may reflect the 'official mind' as much as the actual social composition of the insurgents. Some were rounded up because they were migrant building-workers with a reputation for political violence. Also it must be remembered that many workers with no love for the government kept clear of the fighting because they were uneasy about taking up arms against an elected government, because they viewed the rising as suicidal or because they happened not to live or work in *quartiers* where barricades were erected.

The evidence offers little support to Chevalier's thesis that Parisian revolutionary violence was the logical outcome of massive immigration and consequent underemployment amongst floating, marginalized lumpenproletarians. Paris's diverse popular classes included such casual labourers, factory-workers – some 30,000 in engineering, locomotive manufacture, chemicals, textiles – sweated artisans, and still-exclusive elite craftsmen (jewellery, quality furniture). Only a few hundred of those arrested (2.6 per cent) were rag-and-bone men, vagrants, organ-grinders, street-sweepers, general navvies – men plausibly categorized as lumpen elements. Indeed, the fact that simmering frustrations within the National Workshops, from whose ranks most of the insurgents came, stemmed from resentment at menial navvying tasks and demands for useful jobs in workers' own trades suggests that many of these had a firm sense of professional identity. The most sizeable groups amongst the arrested included:

- 1,725 building-workers, 14.8 per cent of the arrested – and 3.9 per cent of the labour force of that sector
- 1,312 metal-workers, 11.2 per cent of the arrested – and 4.25 per cent of the labour force of that sector
- 1,225 clothing-workers, 10.5 per cent of the arrested – and 1.3 per cent of the labour force of that sector
- 1,004 furniture-workers, 8.6 per cent of the arrested – and 2.6 per cent of the labour force of that sector

Among the trades which provided around 400 suspects each, were printing, textiles, food, transport and clerical work. Inevitably the pattern of arrests in particular localities mirrored, in part, the industrial geography of the city. Dock-workers were prominent in the St Martin canal area, bronze-workers in the Temple *quartier*, joiners in the faubourg St Antoine. Once again the 'ideal type' insurgent emerges as in his mid–30s, married with children, an inhabitant of eastern Paris. Seventy-five per cent were migrants to the city – but they were not, in general, recent migrants attracted to the capital in search of work in the recent depression. Two-thirds had been in Paris for above three years, over one-third for ten years or more. They were not disorientated newcomers but family men established in a trade and a *quartier*. Most had been members of some institution – a mutual aid society, a cooperative, a trade-union or a National Guard unit.

What can one make of these statistics? The less-organized trades – food, transport, domestic outwork – were clearly under-represented. Conversely, luxury craftsmen, though not absent, did not have a major presence: 119 bronze workers and some sculptors and decorators were arrested – possibly men whose jobs had suffered from the flight of affuent clients. The involvement of 1225 tailors and shoe-makers was larger in absolute terms than as a proportion of the overall numbers in these trades (1.3 per cent) – possibly because the hopes of such crafts had been focused on producer cooperatives.

Building-workers and metal-workers were the two most 'over-represented' groups. Both industries were characterized by a mixture of large and small employers. Alongside the army of small building contractors were a group of big public-works contractors – *entrepreneurs généraux* – who were the particular target or worker hostility. Rising above the host of tiny artisanal metal and engineering workshops were large-scale factories such as Cail and Cavé which employed a growing minority of metal-workers. Insofar as direct employer-worker tensions helped engender the class conflict of 1848 these occurred most frequently in such large factories. Tilly and Lees show that construction and metallurgy had both the highest ratios of workers involved in the rising and the highest average number of workers per employer. Workers at the Cavé engineering plant had invited Blanqui to address them, had been active in the clubs and in demonstrations and were involved in June. La Chapelle locomotive builders were in the vanguard of insurrection in northern faubourgs. Thus while many building and engineering workers involved in the rising were skilled, they often worked in large-scale, non-'artisanal' factories or for big building firms. To that extent the 'crowd' of 1848 was more 'proletarian' than that of 1830. Conversely, a higher proportion of club members

were 'artisans', though only 4 per cent of insurgents are known to have been from the clubs (Amann 1975).

In general, the landlord – 'Monsieur Vautour' in Daumier's cartoons – was a more hated figure in popular *quartiers* than the employer. Population growth had driven up rents. During the spring of 1848 there had been concerted working-class refusal to pay rents, even though the municipal police led by neo-Jacobin Caussidière, deeply suspect to the bourgeoisie, had in the last resort backed up the bailiffs. Often after the June rising it was landlords and concierges who tipped off the police to permit 'suspects' arrests.

Some 9 per cent of insurgents were petty-bourgeois, including 191 wine merchants and café owners – men in whose establishments workers had gathered for the endless political discussions of 1848. Tilly and Lees suggest that relatively few master-craftsmen or small *patrons* were involved, a further sign that the old *sans-culotte* coalition was beginning to break up. Conversely Gossez argues that some, at least, of this stratum – he cites shawl and waistcoat makers – felt hostility to large merchants and *confection* entrepreneurs, sympathized with the plight of their own journeymen and can be found fighting against the forces of order (Gossez 1956).

Before analysing those elements of the popular classes who fought *for* the government, a brief parenthesis on the composition and nature of the Parisian labour force may be of use. For, as Joan Scott has shown, categorization of workers is as much, an ideological as a factual exercise – then as now (Scott 1986). One should always, thus, ask who is doing the defining – and for what purpose. Marx, for his own reasons, defined the June insurgents as 'proletarians' – and those elements of the popular classes who fought against them as lumpenproletarians. But for the Paris of 1848 we have an *enquête*, commissioned by the Chamber of Commerce, which purports to offer a statistical analysis of the structure of the labour force. It found, for example, that only 10 per cent of Paris establishments employed more than ten workers, whereas 50 per cent involved a producer working alone or with only one assistant. The question of definition of this latter group was essentially part of an ongoing political battle. For the statistics and definitions in such enquiries were not 'objective', 'hard' facts but could be seen as part of an attempt of the new elite to strengthen its hegemony.

Hence the 1848 *enquête* requires to be 'decoded' – for it was compiled by businessmen and laissez-faire economists who saw it as an 'answer' to workers' demands for a Ministry of Labour and governmental investigation of social problems. The purpose was to calm unrest by 'proving' that poverty was rare – and that much of what the left called 'the working class' consisted, in fact, of 'self-employed'. Hence it defines men working alone in tiny workshops, or at home, as 'heads of enterprises'. In the twinkling of an eye, therefore, Paris became a city of potential petty capitalists. At a stroke the number of troublesome workers had been slashed. Scott plausibly sees this as a covert ideological attempt to break up the political alliance of poor masters, journeymen and industrial workers who, in the discourse of 1848, were calling themselves 'workers'. The technique had been tried before. In 1841 *L'Atelier* had made ironic comments on Baron Dupin's *enquête* which managed to 'solve' the Lyon social question by defining the *canuts* as small

employers and to reduce the number of 'workers' in the French economy to a mere 2 million – 'the hopeless, the lazy, the undisciplined'.

But to return to sociological analysis of the June insurrection. This would be incomplete without consideration of the 'forces of order'. And amongst these, notoriously, were the Garde Mobile – a paramilitary force of undeniably popular composition. In an audacious pre-emptive intellectucal coup, designed to turn bourgeois clichés about the 'criminal and dangerous classes' on their head, Marx portrayed the Gardes as 'lumpenproletarians', *lazzaroni*, a mass sharply differentiated from the industrial proletariat' – the unskilled, casual poor lacking any class solidarity. In contrast, Traugott has claimed that they, too, were recruited from the 'artisan' classes who made up the bulk of their insurgent opponents (Traugott 1980, 1985). Their contrasting conduct must, thus, be explained not in class terms but in the light of their 'organizational experiences' during 1848. The class-based propensities of actors, we are told, are conditioned by sets of contingent organizational forces. Historical analysis must beware of moving from 'class-position' to 'class-action'. For an 'intervening level of analysis' is required to understand how macro-sociological structures are converted into forms of consciousness or possibilities of collective action. Hence human contingency and political variables must be restored to their central explanatory place.

In short, the 'artisans' of the Garde Mobile and of the national workshops had undergone very different experiences during the months from February to June. The Garde was founded in late February with the dual purpose of reducing unemployment and of training a reliable paramilitary force to keep order. Among those recruited, ironically, were barricade fighters of February who were cheered when they patrolled popular *quartiers* in the spring. They were trained by army NCOs, paid 1.50 francs per day, fed, lodged and provided with uniforms. They were sent to suppress post-election riots in Rouen and, with increasing regularity, used to control Parisian demonstrations. In the June fighting 195 were killed, 795 wounded – and 108 subsequently were decorated with the Legion d'Honneur for saving bourgeois civilization.

However, right up to the outbreak of the insurrection, conservatives worried about their loyalty – and radicals hoped to woo them to the socialist cause. Eight per cent deserted during the spring. Their drunken off-duty brawling convinced many of their willingess to fight – but for whom? De Tocqueville observed that 'they went to war as if to a *fête*. But it was easy to see that they love war itself much more than the *cause* for which they fought'. The Republican Garnier-Pagès viewed them as 'intrepid', but with the 'turbulence and fickleness of the people'. They were an 'unforeseen mix of the young, honest and capable workers – and of vagabonds who prowl about the gates of the city'.

Marx echoed the second part of that analysis. Traugott highlights the first. Few were illiterate, *garnis*-inhabitants or casual lumpens – only, perhaps, 3 per cent. Rather, their social composition was a faithful mirror of the wider working class. They came from the same skilled trades as their June opponents – though with slightly higher proportions of precious metal, textile and commercial workers and fewer from the furniture or base-metal trades. The only major difference was in age. The average insurgent was 35, the average Garde 21.

The key to their behaviour lay in the *esprit de corps* which their NCO instructors succeeded in creating. Initial rumblings of discontent were stifled by concessions. Pay was regular. Adequate barracks were provided. All received rifles by April. Uniforms played an integrating role. When they were sent to Rouen many still wore scruffy rags. But Garde commanders shrewdly diverted resentments by blaming delays in issuing uniforms on the Clichy tailors' cooperative for its refusal to speed up production by putting out orders to sweated out-workers!

Above all the Gardes were kept isolated from the tumult in the capital. Two-thirds were housed in forts on the city outskirts. Wealthy bourgeois financed banquets in their honour. By June the Gardes had acquired collective characteristics which were not the same as the individual characteristics of the recruits who joined the force. They had received training – and ideological indoctrination. Insofar as some of them had entered with Republican sympathies, these could be assuaged by presenting their June opponents as enemies of the elected government.

The National Workshops, by contrast, were a failed exercise in social control (McKay 1933). They were established with the purpose of providing relief for the unemployed, of pre-empting demands for genuine 'social workshops' and of channelling workers' loyalties towards organized units directed by *cadres* drawn from the *écoles centrales*. Lamartine frankly described them as an 'expedient for preserving social order' by insulating the mass of the jobless from the 'seditious working class of the clubs'. Unfortunately for such plans, workshop delegates were, by June, in contact with militants from the now-abolished Luxembourg. Half the arrested insurgents had been Workshop members.

Only briefly did the official strategy appear to be working. In April, Workshop men distributed 'moderate' election propaganda. When Luxemburg workers demonstrated for the 'organization of work', Workshop delegates criticized such 'abstract' proposals and called for 'practical' schemes. But by May Workshop members began to appear in radical demonstrations – and the elites lost their faith in the organization as an instrument of labour control. Workshop director Thomas had earlier warned that his pet project could be an instrument for good – or for evil: 'It's organization is like that of a secret society. If there is not sufficient work to permit us daily to distribute idle workers amongst various work sites, controlling them will be extremely difficult.' His prediction proved accurate. His efforts to persuade Ministers to provide funding in order to offer workshop men craft jobs rather than navvying were abortive. This grievance figured high in the consciousness of angry workshop men in June. One of their posters insisted: 'We are not asking for charity. The Republic promised to provide its children with a livelihood. Give us work to permit us to live as free men and you will see, you self-satisfied critics, that we are not *lazzaroni*, asking no better than to live off public funds.'

One of their leaders, Sibert, insisted that the bourgeoisie only dared insult the workshop men because they were protected by 40,000 troops and warned them that workers had not made a third revolution to remain slaves of royalists. Only 'association', he added, could turn France into a true Republic able to live up to the ideals of its motto. Without association, 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity' remained empty words. On the eve of the June rising the Workshop spokesmen were, clearly, espousing the rhetoric of the 'associationist Republic' (Faure and Rancière 1976).

By early June, Thomas, who had sought to give workshop men channels to express their grievances, was sacked – suspected by conservatives of being a crypto-socialist. His successor, Thomas complained, 'suppressed all the levers of action which he didn't understand and by virtue of which I had kept the workers in line'. In the days before the June rising it was workshop delegates who orchestrated the campaign of resistance to the dismantling of the city's welfare provisions.

It was such experiences, Traugott claims, which radicalized the workshop men – not their class origins as such. They had not been isolated from the political life of the city. They had been poorly paid for futile, humilating jobs – and often kept idle. Their grievances had been permitted to fester – whereas those of the Gardes had been promptly resolved.

How plausible is Traugott's revisionism? He is clearly correct to warn against crude attempts to 'read off' political consciousness from social class. Marx's lumpenproletariat thesis is untenable in its most extreme formulation. However, Traugott is surely being cavalier in his dismissal of Caspard's 'cohort thesis' which saw the extreme youth of the Gardes as a highly significant factor? Caspard suggested that young workers were particularly badly hit in the 1840s, victims of a dual crisis in Parisian industry (Caspard 1974). Structural changes in many trades were creating a crisis of apprenticeship – with fewer young workers taken on, and with many of these receiving little 'proper training. Moreover, in the cyclical depression after 1845 it was often youngsters who were laid off first. As worker autobiographies such as that of Truquin make clear, even in 'normal' times apprentices were often bullied by older workers or small-masters before, in time, qualifying as journeymen and being integrated into the trade.

The circumstances of 1845–8 meant that many youngsters had been made redundant before having had a chance either to acquire skills or to be accepted into the solidarities of the craft community. They remained, thus, incompletely socialized into the culture of the Workshop. One may accept Traugott's claim that in February-March 1848 future members of the Workshops and of the Gardes shared common features – that is to say they had had jobs in similar trades and were now, often, unemployed. However if one can categorize a jobless, married journeyman in, for example, the carpentry or small engineering trades as an 'unemployed artisan' to what extent can one use this term to describe a teenager whose training has been abruptly cut short after a couple of years? If 'class' is a 'happening', not a 'thing' – in E. P. Thompson's dictum – then one could argue that one became an 'artisan' over long years of training, or workshop experience, of craft solidarity. Can a youngster without such years of experience be classified in the same way?

In his eagerness to assert that the ethos of the *Gardes* and of the Workshop men was formed by their experiences during 1848 Traugott is forced to suggest that in February future Gardes and their future June opponents shared a similar class identity and ethos. Yet one experience which older workers had lived through was the Revolution of 1830 and the subsequent labour conflicts. Though some young workers fought in the February rising, Traugott's own analysis of that insurrection shows that the average age of participants was higher than that of insurgents of the 1830s. The February crowd included many veterans of previous conflicts. Was

it, therefore, mere accident that the bourgeois government should have made a deliberate effort to recruit young, unmarried workers into the Garde? Is it not likely that they felt that such youngsters would be more malleable because they would have a much weaker sense of class or trade solidarity? Young bachelors would have fewer community ties and, hopefully, less compunction about shooting 'fellow workers'. Is it mere accident that the bourgeoisie, always so keen to endorse the family unit as the basis of a stable social order, should have been willing to pay single youngsters 1.50 francs per day – together with free food, lodging, uniforms – whilst paying substantially less to family men in the Workshops? Traugott himself offers evidence that older workers were, correctly, suspicious of the Garde Mobile project when the government unveiled it. In his *Mémoires d'un Revolutionnaire* (1902) the future Communard G. Lefrançais confesses that as a young worker in March he felt strongly tempted to join the Gardes. It was his father who argued firmly and successfully to dissuade him.

In his enthusiasm to debunk both Marx and the 'radical artisan' thesis Traugott is in danger of throwing the baby out with the bathwater. The June Days are significant, he concludes, not as an example of class warfare but for showing the existence of divisions within the working class. The Parisian workers 'displayed a political indeterminancy defying simple class analysis. If an individual's status as an artisan predisposes him to political activity, it exerts no necessary influence over the direction of his political leanings'. There is an element of truth in these propositions. Yet de Tocqueville, an acute observer and no friend of socialism, was adamant that the June Days were, at bottom, a naked class war. By Traugott's logic one could, of course, point to the existence of black policemen and of conflicts between Zulus and the ANC in South Africa and deny that the struggles there are about race or apartheid. Clearly the 'radical artisan' thesis does raise certain problems. Some artisans in the Midi were, as we have seen, Catholic royalists. Even artisans who supported 'the left' in 1848 were divided, often bitterly, over strategy. Hierarchies of wealth, status and age often led to tensions within the 'artisanate'. Yet even if one accepts all this is it a logical step to move from the discovery of ideological and sociological fissures within the 'artisan class' to the assertion that there is really no connection in 1848 between skilled workers and radical activism?

More central than the June insurrection to the 'radical artisan' thesis are the cluster of activities which surrounded the Luxembourg Commission. Although this was invented by the provisional government as a mere sop to militants who were demanding a Ministry of Labour, it became more than an impotent talking-shop. Sewell views it as a 'craft parliament', the culminating point of the transition which had seen the corporatism of the *compagnonnages* metamorphose into an associationist vision which moved beyond craft-consciousness towards the dream of the emancipation of 'the working class' from the wage system (Sewell 1979). A total of 669 elected delegates of the Paris trades sought to create an 'Estates General of Labour', parallel to the National Assembly. Their central committee coordinated activities and organized demonstrations which – under craft banners – took symbolic control of the city's public space for much of the spring. The discourse and solidarity of the *corps de métier* was utilized as the springboard not

for a nostalgic attempt to return to the lost world of the guilds but for an attempted social republic, of which cooperative workshops, run by delegates elected by the trades, would be the basic units.

Some of the objections to Sewell's thesis have been rehearsed in the previous chapter. It could be argued that neo-corporatism was more an obstacle than a stepping-stone to working-class unity, that *compagnonnages* failed to adapt and democratize themselves in the ways that Sewell suggests. Indeed Judt views the Luxembourg as a source of divisiveness in the Parisian labour movement. By putting up 20 'trade' candidates in the April elections it split the working-class vote and neutralized the efforts of the political clubs (Judt 1986). These candidaes were selected to represent key crafts, but were largely unknown outside them. Their selection excited jealousies amongst other crafts. Only one was elected. Also in the spring of 1848 some small-masters were envisaging the revival of neo-corporatism with a view to recreating the guilds – and disciplining their own journeymen. Were militants who viewed the craft-banners under which Luxembourg artisans marched as quaint, archaic, 'reactionary' – as a step back to the ancien regime – entirely mistaken?

An accurate assessment of the Luxembourg probably lies between these two interpretations. Its delegates, despite lack of funds and of decision-making power, did seek solutions to problems which were the daily concerns of Parisian workers. They forced employers to sign public agreements fixing an agreed wage rate for particular trades. These were usually honoured briefly until the June events gave them free rein to break them with impunity. A related issue was subcontracting, a grievance in the building trade where *tâcherons* had emerged – middlemen who supplied work gangs for big contractors and who derived their rake-off if their gang worked below accepted pay scales or finished jobs early. Successful *tâcherons* often set themselves up as small contractors. Briefly in the spring of 1848 the system was abolished (Bezucha 1983).

The Luxembourg also exerted pressure to give workers greater weight on Conseils des Prud'hommes and to establish public employment offices to replace the private *bureaux de placement* which exploited jobless workers by demanding a sizeable 'cut' if they found them work. This was a concern taken up by the *bourses du travail* half a century later and provides some support to those who have argued that revolutionary syndicalism was the direct heir to associationist trade-socialism (Schöttler 1985).

The issues of prison and convent labour also attracted passionate interest. 'Free' workers, notably in the clothing trades, resented the system whereby private contractors were permitted to employ convicts, often paid in tokens which they spent in prison shops run by the same entrepreneurs. Wage rates in the 'free' sector were, thus, being undercut. Recent exposure of scandals in which convicts had been poisoned by rotten food supplied by private contractors allowed workers to couch their attacks in the rhetoric of humanitarian concern for prisoners. This system, also, was abolished in 1848 only to reappear in the following year under joint pressure from entrepreneurs and prison governors who claimed to find idle prisoners less easy to control. In parenthesis it is worth noting that Chevalier's thesis about the affinities between the 'criminal and dangerous classes' and the

revolutionary crowds of 1848 appears dubious. In the aftermath of February insurgents released political detainees, showed some sympathy with jailed prostitutes – viewed as having committed no real 'crime' – but made no effort to free the 'criminal' prisoners (Perrot 1977).

Predictably mutual aid societies proliferated. Many acted as burial societies, offering the assurance of a 'trade funeral' in a period when the cost of a dignified burial was escalating rapidly as land-prices rose, as cemetery land was sold off to real estate speculators and the poor faced the prospect of a mass paupers' grave.

However the producer cooperative epitomized the broader aspirations of the Luxembourg. It lay at the heart of the 'federalist trade socialism' of 1848. Moss argues that those involved in such projects were essentially rank-and-file journeymen, not a craft elite of luxury workers and small-masters. The goal was the liberation of workers from the wage system. State credit and state orders would, it was hoped, stimulate the emergence of large cooperatives in each trade. Cooperation, Moss claims, should be viewed as a central ideology of the spring – not as a strategy espoused during the labour movement's 'retreat' after the June defeat (Moss 1976). Indeed the cooperative dream in this form – that is to say in line with Blanc's ideas rather than those of Proudhon – clearly relied on a sympathetic state, a prerequisite which appeared more of a possibility before June.

In all, some 50,000 Paris workers may have participated in cooperative ventures between 1848 and 1851. Three hundred associations were established in 120 trades. The prospectus of the decorator Confais may be taken as 'typical'. Until now, it argues, capital had dictated terms to labour. Workers should get their 'revenge' – but in a dignified not a 'brutal' manner. Each trade needed its own 'association'. At present, painters, working at most 200 days per year, were 'machines' exploited by contractors, forced to gather each day on the Place de la Grève in the hope that the chance whim of an employer would give them a day's work. The state should aid embryonic cooperatives by granting credit to purchase raw materials. Once underway a cooperative would make savings by eliminating middlemen's profits. If jobs were scarce, cooperative members should be employed on a rota basis. 'Profits' should be set aside to provide for illness, injury, old age – and for a contingency fund for mutual aid to other trades (Faure and Rancière 1976).

Between the April elections and the June Days the vanguard of Luxembourg workers responded to the evolving political crisis. They blamed their electoral disappointments on workers' political inexperience. They sought to resist the drift to the right by demonstrations, but also by establishing contacts with the increasingly restive National Workshops. They established the *Journal des Travailleurs* as a focal point for regrouping workers' forces. The paper expressed a sense of betrayal that the Republic, in its existing form, was proving a Republic in name only which had reneged on its promises to workers. With the *Journal des Débats* (the official Orleanist paper) now rechristened *Le National*, the Procureurs du Roi metamorphosed into the Procureurs de la République, there was not a single 'sinecurist fattened up by the Monarchy, not an exploitative merchant' who did not cry 'Long Live the Republic'. Only the names had changed. But the 'people of the barricades' felt that this was not enough. They didn't want an American-

style Republic, complete with slaves, or a Venetian Republic with a Doge – but a social Republic where work was honoured and rewarded, where the laws took Liberty, Equality, Fraternity seriously.

The *Journal des Travailleurs* group were activists from several traditions. P. Vinçard, a jewel engraver, had been a communist. P. Bérard, of the Clichy tailors' cooperative, had been close to *L'Atelier*. Montague was a former Cabetist. As Faure and Rancière comment, their previous differences were obliterated by their common experiences in the rapidly changing politics of 1848, as the dream of a 'social Republic' was being threatened (Faure and Rancière 1976). They urged the need 'to unite together into a single bundle all the popular forces who would, through isolation, be condemned to inactivity'. They combined attempts at political mobilization with defence of the associationist dream. On the eve of the June Days they published a *Project for an Association of United Corporations* as a step towards a coordinating body to 'organize the relationship of all industries to one another'. Citizens, who would be consumers of the products of 'social workshops', should organize locally based organizations without trade distinctions. Mutual aid provisions should be made to allow different sectors of industry to support each other, for 'none can suffer without others feeling it'.

Their ideological position is not easily categorized. They were drawn from the crafts – but had a vision of a united working class. They were prone to 'utopian' rhetoric eulogizing a 'Republic of Associations' – yet remained pragmatically aware that only a broadly based workers' party could resist the threat from a reactionary government. Forty-five Luxembourg delegates were to be arrested as June insurgents. It is difficult, in short, to dismiss them as simply 'utopian', naive, apolitical or ineffectual. They had drawn up a coherent project, plotted a strategy in the light of political dangers which they perceived quite clearly. They were simply crushed by a superior military force.

The June defeat faced the labour movement with stark realities of which some of its leaders had been aware since April. Blanc's vision, around which there was some broad consensus, envisaged a sympathetic democratic state which would aid embryonic cooperatives to compete with the capitalist sector. But what if the government were indifferent, or hostile? There were several possible responses. One could adopt a Blanquist analysis and argue the need for a vanguard-led coup to seize state power, destroy the existing state machine and hold power in an interim popular dictatorship until education and propaganda had eroded the influence of clergy and *notables* over provincial France. One could argue, as supporters of Raspail did, the need for an authentic workers' party. One could propose a broad popular front coalition of all men of goodwill on the left and the centre to reverse the electoral defeat of 1848.

Conversely 'moderates' such as elite artisans around *L'Atelier* argued that Cavaignac's regime was still Republican and that one should accept the modest amount of government aid on offer. *Atelier* stalwart Corbon thus joined the official Comité d'Encouragement set up, in autumn 1848, to disburse 3 million francs in state credit – if only to 'mixed' employer-worker ventures which lacked full worker control and were supposed to compete in the market-place, make profits, distribute

dividends. All this was a far cry from grandiose projects to replace capitalism by large-scale cooperatives covering entire industries! (Luna 1969).

Proudhon's approach was very different, since he set no store by political methods – even if, paradoxically, he was now himself a deputy. 'Politics' had, he claimed, since 1789 got French workers nowhere. Workers needed a social revolution. They should build a mutualist association without turning to the state for aid. The credit question should be solved by artisans and peasants pooling their resources, establishing people's banks. If the number of fully fledged 'Proudhonists' remained small, many workers shared the disillusionment with 'politics'. In 1850 a brochure entitled *Le Socialisme Pratique* was published (Faure and Rancière 1976). Its author, Drevet, was a skilled engineering-worker at the big Derosne and Cail plant, with a varied career behind him as a supporter of Blanc's 'statist' associationism, a Luxembourg delegate, a June insurgent. His work is couched in the form of a debate between an enlightened bourgeois, a capitalist conservative, a radical priest, and two workers – one socialist, the second 'deferential'. It contains an eloquent description of the ways in which changes within industry were alienating workers from their work, making them feel slaves of machines. 'Let us talk of tailors, shoe-makers, silk-weavers, lace-makers – all those industries where work is paid by the piece, where, through competition, workers are forced to do 18 hours per day.' Such workers were brutalized, denied access to leisure and culture. They came to hate work, neglected their tools: 'How often in the day do we say "what's the time?" or "how bored I am!"? That's the language we use for much of the day.' If workers worked faster they were laid off sooner. If their ingenuity helped employers to perfect a machine then redundancy followed. 'At the height of a fashion trend workers are forced to do excessive hours, migrants are drawn into the trade – then all are laid off when fashion changes. That is what royalists call liberty.'

There was a remedy, Drevet claimed, if workers could plan to organize production in a way to benefit themselves. But how to achieve this? Drevet no longer had faith in political methods. 'To succeed in politics one has to be . . . a liar. Politics requires *gendarmes*, prisons . . . bailiffs . . . an Army.' Hence 'we don't want anything to do with "politics", since it is politics which has deceived the peoples of the earth'. 'Politics' had remained much the same after as before each Revolution. Only the organization of social forces could increase happiness.

Such an understandable reaction to the traumas of 1848 ignored the fact that state power, now wielded by a self-confident right, was not simply going to disappear. During 1849–50 hundreds of cooperatives were harrassed or suppressed. In 1848 JPs were asked to comment on local cooperatives. Many of them clearly intended to dismiss the associationist dream as impossible, ill-suited to popular psychology and to low levels of popular education. Yet, significantly, when a genuine worker voice is audible in this *enquête* – as, for example, amongst St Etienne ribbon- and glass-workers – cooperation is praised as a moralizing institution which could protect workers against savage competition. The *real* reason, one suspects, for the élite's response to associationism emerges in fears expressed that it had captured workers' imagination and that it was, thus, a genuine threat to employer

authority. As such even the most modest, 'apolitical' cooperative posed an implicit threat to the capitalist order.

It was this determination of the authorities not to tolerate independent worker-run cooperatives which made the 'apoliticism' of a Drevet unrealistic. A similar naiveté is evident in the otherwise perceptive *Almanach des Corporations Nouvelles* (1851). The author, Wahry, had been jailed in 1840 for an attempt to establish a tailors' association. He now advocated cooperatives as the strategy to avenge the heroic victims of the June massacre, to achieve goals which insurrection had failed to secure. He denounced 'tame' cooperatives, established with government encouragement and designed to create a petty-bourgeois worker elite. Yet for all his justifiable contempt for such anodyne, profit-making projects he, too, appears to assume that government would stand by idly and watch an authentic cooperative movement emerge (Faure and Rancière 1976).

It was in Wahry's own industry, tailoring, that the famous Clichy cooperative operated. Before June it had received government orders for National Guard uniforms. Tailors were, perhaps, well suited temperamentally for peaceful associationism. They were less involved than many other radical trades in the June rising – even though in the spring there had been arson attacks on warehouses of confection merchants who supplied goods to the Belle Jardinière department store, an outburst clearly related to male tailors' resentments at the growth of the sweated ready-made sector. The Clichy venture staggered on into 1849, though, like hundreds of other smaller cooperatives in Paris and the provinces, starved of capital and prey to internal disputes over management strategy and profit distribution.

Drevet's long outburst at the alienation of workers by new industrial practices concluded, almost as an afterthought, with a complaint about the low wages paid to exploited female workers in the trades. Such gestures of rhetorical sympathy were commonplace. But how much concern, in reality, did male-dominated artisan associations show for their female co-workers during the Second Republic?

MARSEILLES

W. Sewell's studies of Marseilles, France's largest port, offer substantial support for the 'radical artisan' thesis. A high proportion of those active in clubs, cooperatives and political demonstrations there in 1848–51 were from certain strata of the artisanal class. Hitherto the city had been a bastion of popular Catholic-royalism. The *compagnon*-led strikes there during the Restoration were largely apolitical, and there had been only 16 recorded strikes during the Orleanist regime. Yet it now emerged as a radical stronghold, was one of the few cities to stage an insurrection in June 1848, and became the centre from which Dem-Soc propagada was diffused into rural Provence.

The port's trade had trebled in the 25 years after 1821, and its population had doubled to 191,000 – largely as a result of immigration from the Midi, from northern France and from abroad. Alongside its 'traditional' occupations – dock work, fishing, shipbuilding and artisanal crafts – new industries now emerged such as soap, oil, sugar-refining, chemicals and machine-building. All except the last

employed many unskilled labourers, who were also to be found in navvying and casual dock jobs. The 'artisanate' could be defined as including not merely shoe-makers and tailors but also the port's labour aristocrats, the stevedores, and skilled machine-builders – even though they often worked in factories.

Sewell's quantitative analysis (Sewell 1971) provides a series of criteria by which skilled workers can be distinguished from the less skilled:

	Unskilled	Skilled
Average wage (daily)	2.2 francs	3.4 franc
Literacy (%)	50	79
Born in city (%)	25	50
With peasant parents (%)	57	50
Italians (%)	34	20
With criminal convictions (%)	40	13
Mutal Aid Society membership (%)	3	34
Inhabiting old city (%)	70	42

The unskilled were, thus, disproportionally migrants to the city – often Italian. They were less literate than skilled workers, and more likely to have a criminal record. Few had settled jobs, most being simply classified as day-labourers rather than as workers linked to a particular industry. A total of 31 per cent lacked fixed domicile, and many had no family ties in the city.

However, there were also sharp contrasts within skilled trades between 'open' and 'closed' trades. The latter were typified by the stevedores: 89 per cent were city-born, 71 per cent inherited their jobs from their fathers. Their *compagnonnage*, which enjoyed the de facto toleration of the authorities and of shipping employers, controlled hiring on the waterfront. Their social life was highly exclusive. The disruption of the port's trade in the Revolutionary years had strengthened their Catholic-royalism. Their mutual aid societies had saints' names and observed religious fetes. Their children were baptized within days of birth. Their *patois* was incomprehensible even to Provençal natives from nearby towns. They rarely intermarried with migrants. They were, in short, exclusive, introverted – a 'caste' jealously guarding privileges against outsiders, deeply suspicious of 'foreign' radical ideas (Sewell 1974).

In sharp contrast, only 34 per cent of shoe-makers were city-born, 30 per cent followed their father's trade. Wage levels for 'open' trades were 15 per cent below those of the 'closed' occupations. The city's expansion pulled in migrants from northern France, strangers to Provençal culture. These met in public cafés rather than in the private *cercles* frequented by stevedores. The lengthening delay between birth and baptism of their offspring suggest that they did not share the city's dominant culture of popular Catholicism.

These economic and cultural distinctions correlate with patterns of political mobilization in 1848. Sewell used police archives to analyse 1,398 named militants – including 270 arrested in the June 1848 rising, members of radical clubs and 297 seized during the December 1851 coup. The findings appear to support the 'radical artisan' thesis (Sewell 1971). Unskilled workers comprised 17 per cent of

the workforce but only 10 per cent of militants. Artisans from 'closed' trades were similarly under-represented, making up 13 per cent of the city's labour but a mere 8 per cent of those arrested. In sharp contrast 'open' trade artisans provided 47 per cent of activists, despite constituting only 28 per cent of the workforce.

Where unskilled workers did appear in these lists it tended to be for involvement in riots, demonstrations, singing of seditious songs. Conversely, artisans were linked to more 'organized' club or cooperative activities. And the evidence clearly indicates the greater militancy of the 'open' trades.

What can one make of this evidence? Sewell argues that the unskilled – with weak roots in the city, lacking fixed occupational identity, less literate, often immigrants – were poorly equipped for participation in an organized labour movement. Their propensity for violent, unorganized protest may mirror their greater 'criminality'. 'Open' trade militancy may reflect familiar economic pressures – the sweating of shoe-makers and tailors, the 'proletarianization' of metal-workers in engineering factories, the contrast between falling real wages and the affluence of the city's elites. However militant, metal and bakery workers were often as highly paid as conservative stevedores. In his earlier writings Sewell thus favoured cultural explanations for contrasting behaviour patterns. He suggested that migrant artisans felt excluded from the city's traditional culture and brought with them ideas and experiences from outside the region. Within the same trade migrants were three times more likely than natives to be militants.

Sewell is wary about generalizing from Marseilles evidence. For although the pattern of unskilled behaviour may have parallels elsewhere, the culture of native-born artisans in cities with a stronger neo-Jacobin heritage was rather different. And Sewell admits that his findings raise questions about assumptions made elsewhere in his own writings vis-à-vis the importance of corporatist traditions and of settled communities to artisan militancy. For Marseilles stevedores had the strongest corporatism and yet were a markedly conservative group. And the explanation offered for the radicalism of 'open' artisans is not that they lived in historic communities with local solidarities but that they were largely migrants who disrupted existing communities and culture.

A second problem is raised by Sewell's most recent musings in which he has come to question his own earlier tendency to 'read-off' political attitudes from craft-identity and to explain artisanal radicalism in terms of the threat to certain trades, or stevedore 'conservatism' in terms of their privileged position in the labour market (Sewell 1988). Such 'reductionism' is likely to replace one crude stereotype – which linked militancy to the growth of a factory proletariat – with another, which correlates it with 'declining artisans'. This is unsatisfactory because 'combined and uneven' capitalist development is untidy. In any given city one is likely to find new factories and new machinery alongside the survival – even growth – of 'artisanal' production and the persistence of heavy, manual labour. Growth in the factory sector could produce a 'spin-off' which multiplied artisan jobs in auxiliary sectors. Factories generated employment for skilled machine-builders, maintenance-workers – and the building craftsmen who constructed them. Technological and organizational change threatened some artisans, yet its effects were uneven and left behind pockets of 'privilege'.

Capitalism's uneven development thus had a widely differentiated impact, creating a 'kaleidoscopic' workforce. There was no single path of economic and technological development common to all industries sufficiently ubiquitous to account for the broad-based political mobilization of 1848. Marseilles' 'radical artisans' did include 'threatened' shoe-makers and tailors – but equally bakers and stonemasons whose trades faced, as yet, no comparable problems of sweating or confection. One must, thus, allow for a certain autonomy in the dynamic of political change itself. Political processes may generate broad-based worker mobilization even when economic development is too diverse to produce any homogeneity of workplace conditions for the labour force.

In the light of these reflections the case of Marseilles stevedores, Sewell concludes, needs re-evaluation. He had explained their conservatism largely in terms of their privileged niche in the port economy. City and port authorities and ship-owners had connived at the survival of their neo-corporatist controls on hiring which, in the trade boom of the July monarchy, permitted wages to rise since few additional workers were taken on in the docks. This apparently anomalous situation was tolerated because master-stevedores also acted as subcontractors to hire labourers, guaranteed their 'honesty' and limited the amount of pilfering.

When and why were stevedores radicalized? In the light of Sewell's earlier anaylsis one would be led to look to the 1860s when the building of expanded dock facilities and of warehouses fenced off from the city's popular *quartiers* made reliance on their 'honesty' superfluous, permitting employers to smash corporate privileges, dispense with subcontracting and initiate a system of direct hiring of casual dockworkers at lower wage levels (see Part III Chapter 2). Now, however, Sewell suggests that the change in stevedores' consciousness began earlier. In spring 1848 they were still regarded as 'feudatories of their patrons, the merchants'. They were given arms by the bourgeois National Guard as auxiliaries to the forces of order. But in the June Days some stevedores pointedly refused to fire on working-class insurgents. By 1849 one Dem-Soc election candidate, Astouin, was a stevedore-poet, regarded until recently as a sound royalist. Five hundred stevedores attended a political banquet arranged for him. In June 1848 only 1.1 per cent of the insurgents had been stevedores. By the early 1850s 5.2 per cent of 'dangerous militants' under police surveillance were from the docks – and stevedores comprised barely 3 per cent of the city workforce. This metamorphosis can only be comprehended in terms of the impact of the political crisis of the Republic – the advent of universal suffrage, the upsurge of political debate, the impingement of national political conflicts, the rhetoric of 'workers' rights. In June 1848 stevedores refused to fire on 'fellow workers'. Sewell thus now agrees that labour historians must return to considerations of contingency and agency. In certain circumstances, workers can be mobilized not by changes in workplace experiences or the trajectory of their industry but by alterations in state structure and in political discourse.

THE 'RED CITY': LYON'S ARTISAN REPUBLIC

Lyon was the 'red' city of the Second Republic, viewed by worried bureaucrats as the key to 'disorder' throughout the south east. In the elections of 1848 the left did better there than in Paris. From June 1849 onwards it was paid the dubious compliment of being placed under a military 'state of siege'.

Analysis of the Lyon labour movement requires both a study of its sociological underpinnings in the artisan community and of its precociously mature organizational and electoral policies. After the bitter experience of the risings of 1831–4 Lyon workers appeared well aware that a considered political strategy was a prerequisite of success (Stewart-McDougall 1984).

Lyon shares some characteristics with Marseilles. It was of comparable size, it was growing through an influx of migrants, and the social base of labour protest remained largely 'artisanal'. But Lyon had a stronger radical heritage, little popular Catholic-royalism and the silk sector had a dominant position in its economy unmatched by any single sector in Marseilles. The master *canuts*, who retained a hegemonic role in the labour movement, were a threatened stratum who had succeeded in forging an alliance with their own journeymen against the merchants – not, however, without its internal tensions. Migrant journeymen were not *déracinés*. They entered the city along established migration paths with kin and fellow villagers. They often lodged with the masters. Nevertheless, their taste for carnivals, drink and volatile violence made their acceptance of the discipline of the more austere masters problematic in a period of acute socio-political crisis. Furthermore, the silk labour force also included many female workers – employed in silk preparation and spinning mills, as auxiliaries (family or hired) within the workshops or, in the few weaving factories which posed a direct threat to the *canut* weaving sector, placed under the discipline of nuns.

Predictably the silk-weavers were to be the most militant sector of labour in 1848–51. Other 'artisan' trades – tailoring, hatting, shoe-making, construction, metal-work – were generally radical, but less easy to mobilize. The more 'proletarian' groups such as dye- and chemical-workers appeared much less politicized.

Liebmann has established a clear correlation between militancy and the existence of a range of strong informal ties amongst co-workers (Liebmann 1981). Silk-weavers, above all, had a developed network of kinship, friendship and neighbourhood ties which emerged, in part, from their workplace structure and experiences. He argues that the key to differing levels of mobilization and consciousness within the city's working class should be sought, therefore, in analysis of workshop structures, residential patterns, kinship ties, marriage relationships and *quartier* solidarities. Silk-weavers were distinctive because most worked in the Croix-Rousse. Work was done in workshops which were also homes of master-weavers, who owned the looms and the tools. Journeymen often lodged with the master's family – and frequently came from the same village of origin. The patterns of work were set by independent weavers themselves.

In contrast, the city's other 'artisanal' groups tended to work either in workshops – or on building sites – owned or controlled by entrepreneurs, or were isolated domestic out-workers dispersed throughout the city. Increasingly, tailors, hatters

and shoe-makers did not own their own tools, carpenters did not own their own workbenches. In the building sector, craftsmen were dependent on subcontractors, in the tailoring sector often on *confection* merchants. With no independent *canut* figure to coordinate and control production such workers sectors had, in general, less job control, fewer kinship or *quartier* ties with fellow workers. This was less true of the building industry where Limousin migrants had solidarity with fellow villagers and worked in teams, and where the 'subcontractor' was not always a 'boss's man' but could be a respected, authoritative proto-trade-union leader.

The dye industry provides a further contrast. Here work was increasingly deskilled, controls on apprenticeship had collapsed after strikes in 1846, some factories employed over 200 workers – though this was not the norm – and workers lived dispersed across the city.

Liebman's statistical analysis exposes these different patterns starkly. Forty-two per cent of tailors lived in single-person households, whereas this was so for only 14 per cent of silk-weavers; 74 per cent of silk-worker households contained co-resident members of the same industry, 64 per cent co-resident kin. The comparable average for the whole range of Lyon trades were 28 per cent and 24 per cent respectively – and 14 per cent for factory workers. Analysis of marriage registers showed that of every 20 witnesses present at silk-weaver weddings, approximately 13 were fellow silk-weavers. The 'score' for building-workers was ten, for hatters six, for tailors five and for dye-workers under two.

However the distinctive feature of the Lyon left was the sophistication of its political mobilization. Labour leaders sought, with some success, to concentrate their followers' energies into electoral politics. In the aftermath of February there was some Luddism amongst tobacco workers, river boatmen – who attacked the new steamships – and, most spectacularly, silk-workers, who launched arson attacks on eight 'convent workshops' in the city and in the surrounding area. These were accused of exposing young female workers to vicious clerical-capitalist exploitation – but they also posed a threat to male silk-workers' jobs (Strumhinger 1978c). Yet even here the leaders exerted some control – telling the arsonists that 'everything must be burned and nothing stolen'!

But the main thrust of labour activity was political. Labour leaders persuaded young journeymen who had formed a paramilitary group known as the *Voraces* to abandon the city's fortifications, which they had occupied, and to remove the red flag from the town hall. They tried to coexist with the Republican administration whilst organizing clubs to spread propaganda for the coming elections. They succeeded in getting workers onto the new municipality and into the National Guard.

Aware of the danger of upheaval in Lyon the government introduced palliatives to ease the economic situation – including orders for silk flags to give work to weavers, National Workshops and food vouchers (Sheridan 1979). Even so, there was a good deal of industrial militancy. Building and clothing workers struck for the ten-hour day. Joiners set up a cooperative and a 'committee to organize work' sought to arbitrate in disputes within the silk industry.

The left's electoral performance was impressive. They had nearly 150 clubs with 8,000 members. In contrast to Paris these succeeded in working with the

trades and in drawing up a united electoral list which included men of various socialist tendencies (neo-Blanquist; mutualist) and known and respected figures like Greppo and Benoît. Club membership was 70 per cent working-class and the electoral programme clearly socialist. Six of the 16 seats were won – and five of the 25 working-class deputies in the new parliament were from Lyon.

However, national defeat created tensions within the left. A buoyant right now wished to abolish the Workshops and disband working-class National Guard units. There was a real danger that this would lead to violent confrontation with the Voraces who had no trust in the Republic, had sought to incite garrison troops against their officers, and acted as a paramilitary police force in workers'*quartiers*, which became no-go areas for the authorities. There were some Luddite attacks on textile machines in May, but fresh government orders to the *fabrique* helped to defuse tensions. The Voraces were disbanded without a fight – though they re-grouped as a secret society. The clubs, struggling to survive, managed to dissuade their members from following Paris into unsurrection in June – though the proximity of the army of the Alps may have helped in this.

The scale of repression in late 1848 was, thus, limited. The Workshops were disbanded, workers purged from the National Guard. The clubs survived, but under police surveillance. The labour movement now threw its energies into the cooperative movement. Twenty producer cooperatives were established, only two with government funding. These involved building-workers, joiners, clothing-workers. The joinery cooperative, with 300 members, brought together rival *compagnonnages* and made furniture for schools. It survived til the coup, despite internal squabbling and government refusal of funding. A range of consumer cooperatives also mushroomed. These were not, however, a mere 'retreat' from political activism – for many acted, also, as 'fronts' for political societies and were active in workers' education. Some of their leaders, such as shoe-maker Guillen, were jailed after June 1849. Some of them were ex-Blanquists in contact with secret societies or with the Voraces.

Meanwhile the clubs, despite their restricted scope for action, continued to organize elections in 1849. They succeeded in electing workers onto the municipal council, which began to secularize the schools. In 1849 the Dem-Soc list was successful in the city and in surrounding areas. Five of the 10 'reddest' departments were in the Lyon region. However the Lyon left's careful electoralism was then undermined by a rash adventure in June 1849. When false rumours of a French military defeat in Rome spread, the Voraces led a march of 15,000 on the town hall. Hopes of support from garrison troops proved illusory. Twenty-five died and 800 were arrested as the army bombarded the barricades. This costly strategic error, it has been argued, occurred because of a build-up of tensions due to police harassment, and because young Voraces journeymen were given a free hand by the absence from the city of leaders like Benoît (Stewart-McDougall 1984). The insurgents were predominantly young – 70 per cent were under 35. Two-thirds of them were workers – half of them silk-weavers. But most *canut* masters kept aloof. The goal of the rising was essentially political, a desire to replace the reactionary government by a red republic. Trade-related issues were not to the forefront.

The rising gave the authorities the excuse to impose a state of siege. Cafés and clubs were shut, the press censored, municipal councils in workers' *quartiers* dissolved. The shoe-makers' cooperative was closed down for alleged political activities. Strike leaders were arrested. In 1850, in a show trial, 34 were jailed for the complot de Lyon, an alleged conspiracy to raise an insurrection in the south east. By 1851, despite the survival of the cooperative moment, the Lyon left had largely been demobilized as an effective political force (Liebmann 1980).

The public prosecutor remained aware, however, that the battle for the hearts and minds had yet to be won:

> To be a socialist here is a sort of profession of faith, in conformity with which one regulates relationships from workshops to the secret societies to the barricades. Too little time has elapsed for the mania to recede. There is little professional diversity in the Lyon working population. A strong class and party discipline reigns here as a result of old strike habits . . . [and] 20 years of industrial conflicts.

Militancy in Lyon thus occurred amongst 'open' artisan trades, in workers' *quartiers* into which migrant journeymen were integrated. Labour's mature leaders sought to build a political movement which avoided counter-productive violence and which mixed propaganda, education, electoral organization and cooperative ventures. However, ironically, its one major lapse into insurrectionism exposed it to bureaucratic repression which seriously weakened political organization after mid 1849. That 'lapse' was, perhaps, not entirely accidental – but symptomatic of underlying tensions within the artisan community. The Voraces' taste for direct action signified a growing gap between journeymen and silk-masters which was to deepen in the following years as the silk workshop sector began to disintegrate.

WOMEN WORKERS AND THE ARTISAN REPUBLIC

Mary Stewart-McDougall's important study of the 'Artisan Republic' of Lyon is open to two possible criticims. The first is that her emphasis on the disciplined electoralist strategy of the *canut* leadership causes her to downplay the involvement of younger, more volatile journeymen in 'direct action' and violence. The second, as she herself has subsequently confessed, is that her concentration on the craft grievances and socialist politics of male artisans was at the expense of considerations of the rather different experiences of Lyon women workers.

And yet women played a key role in the city's economy. They worked in large numbers both as auxiliary workers in artisanal silk workshops – where the wives and daughters of male weavers were often augmented by migrant female *dévideuses* – but also in the factory 'convent workshops'. Here they made up nearly three-quarters of the labour force which extracted raw silk from cocoons and prepared and spun it. They often worked a 14-hour day in ill-ventilated, dusty conditions for barely 1 franc. They were subjected either to brutal male foremen or, increasingly, to the control of nuns.

The church in the Lyonnais perceived its role in the industrial economy as inculcation of the orderliness and discipline required by the capitalist system. As

Strumhinger has emphasized, most girls who attended school in the city and the surrounding region went to institutions run by female religious orders where the emphasis was firmly on the value of punctuality, hard work and submission to discipline (Strumhinger 1978c). Pupils were to be socialized into docile acceptance of the social order and of social and industrial discipline. The moralizing stories in their school textbooks warned them of the sad fate which awaited girls who flouted these values. The convent workshops – *providences* – often took girls at the age of 10 direct from primary school. They prided themselves on giving female inmates the necessary inner peace to cope with the world of work without complaint. Often these were lodged in dormitories, from which they could only go out with a signed exit permit. Bad behaviour led to forfeit of wages. Supporters of these institutions praised them as a necessary remedy for female crime. They protected young females from the financial difficulties and sexual perils of trying to find lodgings on their own. Male silk-workers, who saw them as a potential threat to the workshop economy, spread horror stories – many with a basis in fact – about high accident rates and TB in the mills, and about degrading discipline in the dormitories. There was talk of girls seeking to escape to see their parents being kept in chains, having their heads shaved or being tranquillized with drugs. One had to be closed down in 1847 when a 'devil' haunted the dormitories and sexually molested the inmates. In 1844 *L'Echo de la Fabrique* talked of 'industrial prisons' where 'sordid interests are hidden under the cloak of sacredness or of religion and charity'. Capitalists increased their profits – and created intolerable competition for small masters.

And yet there were those who accused the *canuts* themselves of exploiting their wives, daughters and female assistants. When Flora Tristan, the socialist-feminist propagandist, visited the city she won applause from male weavers by attacking their exploitation by the merchants. She then jeopardized her popularity with them by insisting that their own wives were doubly exploited – by capitalism and by their own husbands. Strumhinger argues that the blinkered attitude of male artisans to the whole issue of female work was a major source of division within the Lyon working class. By failing to champion the cause of equal pay for women – but instead dreaming of some implausible removal of women from the labour force – men sent women defenceless onto the labour market. And, as Tristan warned, if women were not given jobs at equal pay rates this was bound to increase the probability that male pay rates would be undercut.

What role, if any, did women then play in the popular mobilization of 1848–51? What did the 'Artisan Republic' offer to them? Were women much more Catholic – because of their upbringing and education – than their anti-clerical menfolk? If so, did this lead them to accept the church's insistence that they should be docile and accept industrial discipline? (Heywood 1989). Did women play a part in Luddite assaults on convent workshops – or did they view these incidents as a threat to female jobs?

It appears that women were largely absent from much of the popular activity of the Second Republic. They played no part in the Voraces revolts, though they heckled the troops. They were, unsurprisingly, not members of workers' paramilitary groups, nor of Blanquist conspiratorial societies. They took no part in club

debates – though they were sometimes spectators. The advent of universal *male* suffrage and of electoral politics widened the sexual divide – since women were denied the right to vote.

On the other hand the city had its own small groups of St Simonians, Fourierists and Cabetists, whose activists had often encouraged debate on women's rights. Eugenie Niboyet, wife of a Protestant lawyer, had established a feminist journal in the city under the July Monarchy which favoured women's education and a 'sisterhood' between bourgeois and working-class women. Attempts were made by seamstresses and others to establish producer cooperatives with female supervisors in 1848 and to demand equal pay and access for women to the National Workshops. Women were involved in attacks on the convent-workshops – for many women in the workshop plain-weaving sector found their wages undercut by the new factories.

Above all there was a strand in radical discorse which emphasized the key role of the wife in the entire workshop economy. The artisan family and family production was seen as the basis for the solidarities of the new social order – though not of 'order' in the way defined by Catholics, who eulogized the family for rather different purposes. This emphasis on the artisan's wife as the bedrock of worker solidarities may have emerged, of course, because of the way in which the entire family workshop economy was under threat. The average age of marriage had risen to nearly 30. It was increasingly difficult for couples to establish a viable small *atelier*. Rates of marital breakdown and illegitimacy were rising. Wives of artisans often found themselves reduced to working longer hours on the looms for lower pay, whilst still attempting – and often failing – to establish a viable home environment for their husbands and children.

The disintegration of many artisanal family units, and the difficulties experienced by single working women in affording lodgings and accommodation inevitably swelled the ranks of the city's prostitutes. The majority of those arrested for prostitution came from the silk industry. And one of the experiments – albeit short lived – of the people's Republic in Lyon in 1848 was an attempted prostitutes' cooperative!

Joan Scott's sophisticated analysis of the politics of gender in the Parisian garment trades in 1848 reaches somewhat similar conclusions (Scott 1984). She castigates recent labour historiography for its obsession with craft concerns of male artisans, insisting that working women and the working family have to be reintegrated with labour history. The 'utopian' socialist discourse of the 1840s was not simply preoccupied with artisan cooperatives. Fourierists and St Simonians raised issues of the family, women's rights and women's work. And amongst those influenced by these debates were a vanguard of female workers in Paris including seamstresses Suzanne Volquin and Jeanne Deroin. The feminist newspapers *La Voix des Femmes* insisted that 'it is better that women should have jobs than a dowry. If men and women both furnish the means of existence, they will help one another to become united'.

The image of women's work promulgated by the *enquête* of the Paris Chamber of Commerce was still of married women doing jobs in their spare time to top up the income of their better-paid husbands. It ascribed levels of female wages simply to market forces – arguing that the minority of independent women workers, reliant

solely on their own wages, inevitably found that these were reduced because they were undercut by married women who could work for low wages. Indeed the enquiry viewed independent female wage labour as a symptom of wider social and sexual dislocation and, like Parent-Duchâtelet, tended to blur the line dividing them from prostitutes.

And yet in the garment trade, which occupied tens of thousands of Parisian women, by no means all female workers were either married or working in the sweated confection sector. Women, it is true, made up 60 per cent of all confection workers by 1848, but also 25 per cent of the bespoke sector, including an elite of skilled dress-makers. It was from amongst the latter that the vanguard emerged who sought to establish producer cooperatives for seamstresses. When the government ordered goods from these cooperatives, but at rates well below those paid to male workers, the Association Fraternelle (sic!) des Ouvrières Lingères denounced this 'deception' as 'despotism under a new name . . . Mystification perpetrated by men'.

Women's work experiences differed from those of men. Male skilled tailors tended to prefer to work in workshops, viewing the domestic outwork sector as synonymous with sweating. Women, however, saw the advantages of working at home, since it enabled them to combine sewing with bringing up children. They sought improvements in crèche facilities, increased pay – but they accepted their 'domestic duties'. 'We ask not to be good citizens, but good citizenesses. If we are demanding our rights, it is *as women* that we do so . . . in the name of our sacred family obligations.' This acceptance of domestic work clearly made collective action and cooperatives more difficult. However women did demonstrate in the spring of 1848 against competition from prisons and convents.

What was the attitude of male tailors? During the July Monarchy militants like Grignon had tended to argue that their ideal was a male wage sufficiently high for women not to have to work. In 1847 only 6 per cent of members of Paris mutual aid societies were women. And most such societies refused women the right to speak! However there was some male support for women workers in 1848. Some tailor activists admitted that female paid labour was inevitable, and that decent jobs for women were essential if women of the popular classes were to avoid being driven into prostitution. And, as in Lyon, there was a good deal of rhetorical emphasis on the working-class family unit, based on a mixture of love and economic interdependence, as infinitely preferable to the family values of the bourgeoisie – whose marriages were based on sordid property transactions and whose supposed concern for familial values did not prevent bourgeois males seducing their servants or paying for the services of working girls driven into prostitution. Indeed an idealized version of the proletarian family was used as a symbol of the new social order which the revolution was creating. It was only in the 1850s and 1860s, Scott argues, that the 'Proudhonist' emphasis on domesticity and the danger of female 'dilution' came to dominate Parisian artisan ideology.

PROLETARIANS AND POLITICS

Analysis of worker's mobilization during the Second Republic in cities where 'proletarian' factory workers coexisted with 'artisans' has, thus, tended to confirm the relatively low level of militancy of the former. Is this pattern repeated in industrial regions dominated by workers employed in large-scale industry such as the textile regions of the Nord, Normandy and Alsace, in major coal fields and company towns?

G. Stedman-Jones has warned against the modish thesis which interprets urban popular protest in Europe in 1848 as dominated exclusively by 'reactionary radical' artisans and which emphasizes the passivity of the industrial proletariat which, as itself the product of industrial capitalism, could envisage no alternative to it (Stedman-Jones 1983). Chartism, he reminds us, won as much support from the textile proletariat of Lancashire and Yorkshire as from threatened handloom-weavers or London shoe-makers. The ravages of the Depression did not spare 'proletarian' workers. And the political ferment of Europe in 1848 was capable of spreading contagiously to all sectors of labour.

We have already rehearsed in the previous chapter interpretations of the supposed 'passivity' of industrial workers. Stearns has argued that the textile factory workers were usually unskilled or semi-skilled and easily replaced, that they included many women and children and that their long hours, low pay and poor working and housing conditions, engendered misery and exhaustion but only rudimentary and sporadic protest. Reddy has suggested that former outworkers transferred their patterns of work and attitudes into the factory, functioned as 'independent' family work teams 'selling' yarn or coth to the entrepreneur and refused to act as 'wage-earners'. Sewell, adding his gloss to Reddy's thesis, has argued that corporatist tradition in textiles had been undermined by the 'proto-industrial' transfer of work to the countryside in the late eighteenth century and that, in consequence, once these workers moved into the factories in the nineteenth century they lacked the 'resources' of *compagnonnage* solidarities on which artisanal trades could rely. And studies of mining and metallurgical workers have explained low levels of militancy by a combination of geographical isolation, peasant-worker status and company paternalist controls.

However the behaviour of 'proletarian' workers in the Second Republic does suggest that their militancy has too often been underestimated. A. Blanqui's enquiry in mid 1848 into the Rouen textile workers emphasizes the advent of the Republic and of universal suffrage had – in the context of severe unemployment – shattered the docility which had surprised and delighted local employers in 1845–7 (Demier 1982). The 'lyric illusion' of class harmony which appeared to reign in some French towns in the aftermath of February was singularly brief in Rouen. The radical *commissaire*, Deschamps, found himself trapped in the middle of a bitter class conflict, trying vainly to act as conciliator. In March there were Luddite attacks on mills and railway lines. The jail was attacked and prisoners released. When conservative rural votes led to the defeat of the workers' radical candidates in the April elections, troops and Gardes Mobiles quelled rioting which left 39 dead in a tragic mini-prelude to the June Days (Merriman 1978). With 17,000 in

the city on poor relief social tensions remained high. The bourgeoisie, as Blanqui noted, no longer recognized their once-so-deferential workers, described by another observer as 'starving men awaiting a Spartacus'. They secured the removal of Deschamps for his pro-worker sympathies, and complained bitterly at the costs of local national workshops. Blanqui's investigation in mid-summer left him in no doubt about workers' bitterness. His efforts to preach laissez-faire were greeted with scorn. 'How many workers' *blouses* can be made from your frock-coat?' one worker commented. A few workers appeared to accept his argument that the city needed social calm to restore business confidence and enable the textile industry to revive. But many denounced the *patronat* as arrogant and brutal. They argued that long work hours and mechanization led to over-production and lay-offs. They resented employer charity as humiliating. In two-thirds of the mills he visited he found clear evidence of the impact of the 'poison' of radical propaganda. Deference had been shaken. Some of the workers' rhetoric was 'modern', with references to the 'Social Republic' and the 'right to work'. But much of it was atavistic, evoking the Year II, the need to burn the chateaux of the 'tyrants'. Insofar as a 'Social Republic' was evoked it was more as myth than as coherent political strategy. It was described as a regime in which the *gros* would be forced to respect justice, where the poor would be humiliated less. What was clearly absent from workers' discourse was the rhetoric of fraternal associationism. By May 1849 the Dem-Socs won 32.5 per cent of votes in the city. The *patronat*, which disowned the report which they had commissioned Blanqui to prepare, were convinced that only some sort of authoritarian regime could restore their control.

However, verbal and electoral support by Rouen textile-workers for the Dem-Socs cannot disguise the fact that the alliance between them and the political left remained uneasy and fraught with potential misunderstandings (Reddy 1984). Clearly the associationist-cooperative programme had little apparent relevance to the needs of a proletariat which worked in mills of, on average, 200 workers. The Second Republic, Reddy claims, failed to offer factory-workers a coherent public language in which to express their aspirations. Too many radical politicians failed to understand their real grievances and hopes because, consciously or otherwise, they accepted Villermé's 'myth' that such workers were simply immiserated, overworked, unhealthy, ignorant. Deschamp sought to appease them by negotiating an 11-hour day and a uniform wage scale. In fact, Reddy claims, workers' actual concerns were rather different, since they viewed themselves as independent producers selling their product to the entrepreneur. They wished to continue to be treated as such. If new technology raised productivity they wished to be paid more for the extra yarn and cloth they 'sold'. They wanted checks on employer fraud, fewer fines, less draconian discipline. The 'concessions' won on their behalf by Deschamps were not, thus, central to their real concerns.

In the Nord textile towns the advent of neo-Jacobin *commissaire* Delescluze gave political encouragement to labour militancy in a region where the main forms of protest since 1845 had been food rioting, sporadic Luddism, vagrancy and xenophobic attacks on Belgian workers who made up 6.7 per cent (77,000) of the population and who were resented by French workers for their docile acceptance of low pay (Lęntacker 1956). The crisis had been particularly acute in the region.

Bread prices had risen 66 per cent in 1845–7. Two-thirds of Roubaix workers had been unemployed in May 1847 and arrests for vagrancy had reached 100 per day in Lille. Now, however, mutual aid societies and embryonic trade-unions emerged amongst some male texile-workers – wool-combers, textile-printers, carpet-makers, factory maintenance men, fine-cotton-spinners. However, unemployment rose again in the summer of 1848 as business confidence declined. By June 1848 the Lille textile sector was producing at only one-third of capacity.

The crisis accelerated the concentration of production in the region into a smaller number of larger mills. When production recovered in 1848–9 and unemployment fell, workers took advantage of the situation to mount a series of strikes. These were marked by some 'strategic' Luddism designed to prevent immigrant blacklegs from breaking strikes and by an attempt to establish an alliance between unions in Lille, Roubaix and Tourcoing. By 1851 the fragile textile economy was again in trouble, a malaise blamed by local Chamber of Commerce on businessmen's alarm at the prospect of Dem-Soc electoral victory in 1852.

If producer cooperatives had little appeal in a region of large-scale factory production, consumer cooperatives began to flourish. Bianchi's radical *Messager du Nord* exerted some influence on a core of militant workers and a few political clubs were founded. However, levels of working-class political sophistication remained fairly low. In December many workers voted for Cavaignac – and the popular protest vote went to Louis Napoleon. Rural outworkers, influenced by the clergy, tended to vote for Catholic *notables*. There was minimal resistance in December 1851 to the coup. A few artisans around Anzin took up arms, but received no support from the miners (Merriman 1978).

Efforts by Bianchi's radicals to understand workers' grievances and to formulate their demands were rarely very successful. Radicals called for higher wages and shorter hours. The actual concerns of textile workers were more complex. The wool-spinners' organization (Société Républicaine des Fileurs de Laine) gave priority to demands for a say in hiring practices, for reduction in fees charged for light and steam, and for workers to benefit from new machines in proportion to the increase in productivity. After the defeat of strikes for these demands in 1849 employers sought to impose complex new piecework systems, with workers' pay varying according to the type of machine being operated. With militants like Debuchy now jailed, employers gradually won the upper hand in their fight to impose a recognizable 'wage system' (Reddy 1984).

Elsewhere such battles over managerial control had already been won by employers. Mulhouse had some 12,000 workers employed in around 50 factories. Most of these were in textiles, though there were also some 1,500 employed in railway locomotive and textile-machinery plants. The city has generally been regarded as an example of precocious employer paternalism and of working-class deference. This is scarcely an accurate characterization, however, of the town's history during the Second Republic when it became a Dem-Soc bastion, 'the key to disorder in this region, the home of Alsatian demagogy' (Borghese 1980).

Certainly the Protestant *patronat* had introduced wide-ranging paternalist projects – workers' housing, mutual aid societies, food stores, crèches, schools. In 1846–7 they bought up grain to keep food prices down. Financing such schemes

became, however, problematic during the depression. 'Paternalist' employers cut pay and laid off workers. There were food riots in June 1847 and troops were needed to control strikes. Militancy was spearheaded by skilled engineering workers but also by male cotton-printers. In 1846 there were some 5,500 cotton-printers employed in 14 mills, 46 per cent of these were adult males, many of them Protestants born in the town. By contrast cotton spinning, which supplied fewer labour leaders, employed a workforce which was heavily female and which tended to be Catholic, illiterate and to speak Alsatian-German patois. Cotton-printers were resentful of paternalism rather than grateful for it. Their association demanded the right to control their own mutual aid society, insisting that it was an insult to their dignity as adults not to be allowed to do so.

The progress of the labour movement was marked by gains in autumn 1848 in municipal elections. The advent of workers to the city council gave a boost to factory militancy. Troops made 50 arrests during one textile strike. The prefect expressed alarm: 'The workers are becoming more and more aggressive in their language. They seem proud of the [election] results which allowed them to estimate their support.' Radical leaders sought, however, to channel workers' activities into electoral politics and the Dem-Socs did well in the May 1849 election. In the next month a petition was handed to the authorities by a cotton-printer, an engineering worker and a printer denouncing the government's Roman policy. In August Louis Napoleon was booed when he toured the town. Although the left had support from small shopkeepers hostile to company stores, teachers and tavern-keepers, it was, claimed the authorities, worker militants who set the tone. 'The socialists have long since absorbed the Republicans. The Republic, as they envisage it, is nothing less than the realization of their utopias.' In 1850, harassed by the police, militants went 'underground' into secret societies. After the coup, during which radical leaders were arrested, the city's workers, in one last, defiant gesture, voted 'No' in the plebiscite.

The degree of political sophistication displayed by the Mulhouse working class was atypical of factory towns, closer to the world of Lyon than of Lille. How can one explain the contrast between Alsace and northern textile towns? Did the Protestant culture of cotton-printers incline them towards radical politics? Was there any significance in the fact that the indebted small-peasantry of the Alsatian hinterland were more radicalized than their Catholic counterparts in the Nord or Normandy – even if the rural left was tinged with anti-semitic hostility to 'Jewish usurers'. Did the existence of cotton-printers, allied with engineering workers, provide a greater nucleus of skilled male workers than elsewhere? Whatever the explanation, the Alsace example provides a warning against assuming that factory textile-workers employed by paternalistic employers were invariably deferential proletarians.

The role of miners and heavy-metallurgical workers in isolated company towns in labour mobilization was fairly insignificant. During a rare strike of miners at Littry (Lower Normandy) the tone remained deferential. A letter was sent to the manager expressing the strikers' regret at the pain the dispute might cause him, insisting that they had no wish to appear ungrateful for company benevolence. In his turn the manager, reflecting on the jailing of strikers, observed sadly that it

was 'painful for the court to find the guilty amongst workers so remarkable until now for their submissiveness and their spirit of order' (Leménorel 1988). The Decazeville mining and iron-forge company sailed serenely through the upheavals of 1846–51, reaping the reward for its blend of discipline and selective paternalism perfected in earlier years (Reid 1984a).

At the news of the February Revolution director Cabrol gathered 'his' workers together for a stern lecture warning that political upheaval was in itself a potential cause of business uncertainty which might threaten jobs: 'I made the workers realize that they themselves had contributed to aggravating the situation. But then, willing to rehabilitate them, I told them that they had been fooled and seduced by the lies of anarchists.' To preserve jobs production costs had to be cut. As a free citizen, any worker unhappy with his situation was at liberty to leave town. Cabrol ran out of town a mining engineer suspected of Republican leanings, and warned the Republic's *commissaire* to keep away: 'I am the master here – more than any *Commissaire* – and more than the Provisional Government itself in Paris.' He insisted that he had 'no intention of abandoning any part of my autonomy'. His desire to shield Decazeville from 'infection' by subversion was facilitated by the culture of the surrounding countryside whose Catholic peasantry were largely immune to the lure of Dem-Soc propaganda.

Miners in the more heavily industrialized Nord were less quiescent. At Anzin a strike in 1849 demanded a minimum wage and the removal of recently introduced pit horses which threatened the haulage jobs of young workers. But with Anzin's coal production cut during the depression the employers held the whip hand. A miner, Deltombe, did attract reasonable support in the pit-villages when he stood as a Dem-Soc candidate in May 1849, but miners' industrial militancy faded.

The mining and engineering complex of Le Creusot experienced rather more troubles, despite the company's sophisticated paternalism. Despite being a relatively isolated industrial centre it was located in Burgundy, where Republican traditions going back to the 1790s were sustained by the anti-clerical professional middle class and where communal rights disputes and the crisis of the wine industry fuelled grievances amongst peasants and small-town artisans (Lévêque 1983). This radical rural hinterland permitted a Le Creusot engineering worker, Heitzmann, to win a seat in the 1849 election. He had been a club leader since 1848 at Le Creusot and secured a strong vote there. Gradually, however, Schneider reasserted his control. He used the economic slump to lay off militants – despite receiving letters threatening that company property would be burned down and sabotage attacks on local railway tracks. In April 1850 local miners struck against pay cuts and to demand reinstatement of four leaders. Troops had to be sent when angry crowds released a jailed militant. The balance of power shifted decisively back to the company. By 1851 the authorities could report 'The coal basins are perfectly quiet. The repression of the last Le Creusot riot has left very salutary memories in the working class.'

Schneider emerged relatively unscathed from this first challenge to his hegemony because he held major trump cards. With the slump cutting the firm's engineering workforce by 50 per cent metal-workers were wary of risking dismissal by supporting the miners. Heitzmann was exiled from France after June 1849. There was

little solidarity from workers in neighbouring pits such as Blanzy, where the workforce was still quasi-peasants. But the basic ineffectiveness of any labour movement in Burgundy remained the numerical weakness of the working class itself. In most of the region's towns (Mâcon, Chalon) workers made up barely 10 per cent of the active population. Insofar as workers played a role in the Burgundian Dem-Soc movement they did so as subordinate allies of bourgeois leaders who directed a broad populist alliance whose main activists were peasants and rural artisans. Of 20 Dem-Soc candidates in the 1849 election in the region Heitzmann had been the only industrial worker.

The most sustained militancy occurred amongst miners of the Loire, where the Second Republic added a new twist to the ongoing saga of local resistance to the CML monopoly (see previous chapter), which suddenly found itself deprived of the support of its Orleanist protectors (Guillaume 1966). But the Republican lawyers and small ribbon manufacturers who dominated the local administration in spring 1848 urged miners to avoid, under threat of the 'full rigour of the law', violent action. Miners burned effigies of CML directors and remained in a state of 'terrifying . . . excitement'. They also made varied demands. In answers to the 1848 Industrial *enquête* they denounced child labour, urged educational opportunities for their children, attacked 'paternalist' controls and demanded elected pit-safety delegates and independent medical care facilities rather than company doctors. If these demands were refused they called for pits to be nationalized, or even turned over to worker management. Some miners clearly looked back to an earlier era of 'independent colliers' before the advent of large-scale capitalism. Indeed as late as the 1880s attempts were made in the Loire to establish *mines aux mineurs*. A central committee was set up to negotiate on behalf of all the Loire miners.

To head off this movement the CML emphasized the generosity of its paternalism. It laid off relatively few miners during the slump. Free company medical provisions and subsidized food won the praise from the prefect as valuable contributions to order 'in these dark days'. The calm produced by this calculated generosity was threatened in 1851 by a harsher strategy imposed on management by CML directors from Paris which led to 350 redundancies. Ensuing protest strikes coincided with a fresh burst of hostility towards the CML. Although local bourgeois critics had toned down their attacks on the company in 1848–9 for fear of inciting unrest in a period of political and social instability some politicians and state mining officials grew disillusioned with the CML. Bonapartists saw it as a source of incessant controversy in the Loire. In 1851 Gavon, the miner's leader, hit on the shrewd tactic of sending delegates to Paris with a petition to Louis Napoleon. In 1854 the Bonapartist regime, in a gesture to illustrate the Emperor's role as the workers' friend, split up the CML into four smaller companies.

But the resort to Bonaparte's benevolence illustrates Loire miners' strategic dilemma. Much of their rhetoric evoked the 'good old days' of shorter hours, flexible work routines, of elected *chefs de brigade* leading autonomous work-teams at the pit-face – a world of small-scale mining before the advent of CML engineers and foremen. Yet the scale of mining by 1851 was too large to make this *mine aux mineurs* dream realistic. Hence the recourse to pleas for state protection.

Nevertheless, Loire miners' political sophistication was relatively high. They

worked in an old-established industrial region alongside ribbon-weavers and small metal-workers. Unity amongst such a heterogeneous working class was difficult. But the radicalism of weavers influenced the miners' consciousness. Like Lyon *canuts* the ribbon-weavers attacked convent-workshops, demanded a *tarif*, founded producer cooperatives. They set up clubs in St Etienne in 1848 and Chapus, their leader, broke with the moderate Republicans. Workers were elected onto the city's municipality. Local miners were thus drawn into a Dem-Soc movement which, in this region, had a strong workerist orientation (Gordon 1985).

3

The Politics of Democratic Socialism

WORKERS AND THE BROAD LEFT

Mary Stewart-McDougall's work on Lyon is important because of its emphasis on the political organization and strategy of the popular movement. Although the Dem-Soc organization received solid support from workers, to whom its 'associationist' ideology was largely directed, it is misleading simply to characterize it in these terms. It had a more diverse social base and a wider political programme. Recent historians of this neglected and usually underestimated movement, most notably Berenson and Margadant, have emphasized that though the grievances of threatened artisans – and of indebted cash-crop peasant producers – were of importance in providing the left with a popular audience, the mass political mobilization of 1848–51 cannot simply be reduced to such issues (Berenson 1984). Any analysis *must* take into account the impact of the advent of universal (male) suffrage and of the efforts of the popular classes to utilize – and defend – their new political rights. Hence the left's organization, political strategies and propaganda techniques have been scrutinized. Popular support had to be mobilized. To achieve this the Dem-Socs attempted to construct a national social-democratic party with the aim of moving popular protest away from localized, sporadic violence – Luddism, forest riots, tax protests – towards activities which could achieve political power. In the face of bureaucratic repression, the alternative populist appeal of Bonapartism and the entrenched power of landed and industrial notables – and of the clergy – in much of France, particularly the north and west, they 'failed'. Recent historiography has suggested, however, that their efforts were less pitiful, their defeat less ignominious, than once suggested.

The activities of the Solidarité Républicaine group in early 1849 were the first clear signs that the left was recovering from the crippling defeats of 1848. Though repression soon dissolved this group as such, its project of regrouping the left's diverse forces, of building a broad-left coalition with the widest possible social and ideological support and capable of winning the May 1849 elections, was carried on. They hoped that the Bonapartist presidential victory and growing authoritarianism would alarm all Republicans, centrists as well as radicals, and convince them of the need for unity. They hoped that Bonaparte's appointment of royalist minis-

ters and failure to 'deliver' on the populist promises of his presidential election campaign would enable them to make inroads into his electorate.

During 1849–50 the Dem-Socs attracted support from a wide cross-section of French society. These included 'moderate' Republicans, alarmed by the government's clericalism and its education policies. *Réforme* Radicals like Ledru-Rollin worked with Christian-socialists like Leroux, Fourierists like Considérant and neo-Blanquists such as Lapponneraye, editor of the influential *Voix du Peuple* of Marseilles. The 'party' failed, however, to win over either hard-left worker militants, who saw the lesson of 1848 as being that a worker-led socialist party was needed, or mutualist Proudhonists who rejected all 'political' solutions.

The party's sociology was similarly diverse. Its leaders were usually professional men such as doctors (Raspail), writers (Sue), journalists (Joigneaux), lawyers (Ledru-Rollin) – but also included maverick land-owners and provincial businessmen. Its intermediate *cadres* were often petty-bourgeois – postmen, small shopkeepers, *cafetiers*. In Beaune arrondissement in Burgundy 27 per cent of primary schoolteachers were reported by the prefect to be activists or sympathizers. Rank-and-file support came from peasants, particularly in central and southern France, and from workers. In one list of party supporters from Saône-et-Loire 61 per cent were artisans (Lévêque 1983).

Inevitably, party ideology and programme had to be tailored to reconcile, as far as possible, the interests and concerns of this diverse clientele. The vision of the 'Social and Democratic Republic' was one of participatory democracy, achieved and consolidated, if possible, by electoral means. Railways and mines would be nationalized, the state would provide cheap credit and orders for worker and peasant cooperatives. There would be free, secular education, progressive income tax – and a package of measures for peasants, including repeal of the wine taxes and of the forest codes. The party expressed its solidarity with progressive forces in Europe. When it raised a pro-Kossuth subscription in Burgundy, 66 per cent of those who gave donations were workers or artisans.

This blend of 'structural' and piecemeal reform was a synthesis of Republicanism and of associationist socialism. 'Republic, democracy, socialism are essentially the same thing', Cabet had claimed at a political banquet in late 1848. To reassure potential peasant and petty-bourgeois voters it was emphasized that private property sanctified by the sweat of the owner's brow was not in question. The 'villains' were a narrow obligarchy of financiers, big merchant-capitalists and royalist landowners. If 'userers' were denounced, there was praise for 'honest' industrialists hit by shortage of credit. The *Union Républicaine* paper (7 August 1850) evoked a worthy France of 'workers, small proprietors, industrialists' counterposed against 'men of leisure, big landowners, powerful capitalists'. 'Small industrialists, shopkeepers, cultivators, medium and small landowners, tenant farmers, proletarians of city and countryside – our interests, our needs, are exactly the same' asserted one typical Dem-Soc propaganda pamphlet (Berenson 1984).

Marx viewed such rhetoric with scepticism, as a 'utopian' effort to wish away class differences. The Dem-Soc movement was not in any sense an independent workers' party. Workers provided many local activists – but as a group they played a subordinate role in a broad cross-class coalition under bourgeois leadership. P.

Lévêque's study of Burgundy emphasizes that it was essentially a party of *petits gens*. A handful of local leaders were workers (stonemasons; locksmiths) but most were petty-bourgeois. At Louhans the authorities' *bête noir*, seen as corrupting the commune, was a small tailoring employer 'who has used the influence given to him by his position as head of the workshop to convert young workers under his command and to get them to throw themselves into the socialist party' (Lévêque 1983). In May 1849 the number of authentic worker candidates put up by the Dem-Soc was lower than in April 1848 – except in cities like Lyon where the labour movement was particularly strong.

The role played by radical bourgeois in the movement suggests that any analysis of labour politics in the Second Republic which emphasizes only the 'autonomous' associationist socialism of artisan workers is misleading. M. Agulhon's study of the Var emphasized the importance of the 'cultural brokerage' of progressive lawyers who, by defending the interests of villagers in disputes over forest rights and the wine tax helped to link peasant grievances to national political debates (Agulhon 1982). A similar process occurred in provincial towns. In Toulon and Toulouse the 'democratic patronage' of radical bourgeois, built up since the 1830s, survived into the Second Republic – even if by 1850–1 there appeared signs that some of the popular rank and file of the Dem-Soc movement were growing disillusioned with the bourgeois leadership because of its electoralist strategy and excessive vagueness on social issues (Aminzade 1981).

The Dem-Socs showed ingenuity in transmitting their message, despite the increasing repression directed against their activities. *La Propagande Démocratique et Sociale Européenne* took over from the outlawed *Solidarité Républicaine*. Radical provincial papers sold 1-franc shares to their subscribers. As police clamped down on colporteurs who had hawked their propaganda round the towns and countryside in early 1849, the party turned to postmen and the mail service to disseminate its 'poison'. Sympathetic café-owners permitted Dem-Soc newspapers and *almanacs* to be read out loud. In Burgundy 143 of 524 known subscribers to *Le Peuple* were *cabaretiers*. Road-workers, coach-drivers, river boatmen, railway-workers and track-layers were all recruited to transmit printed material. In Joigny (Côte d'Or) police reported that all the railmen, except one, were 'full-blooded reds'. In Puisaye (Yonne) stone-cutter C. Lamy read newspapers aloud to fellow villagers. In September 1850 two tramping journeymen from the Nord were arrested in Valence (Vaucluse) whilst distributing Dem-Soc newspapers. Migrant seasonal workers such as the Limousin peasant-masons who worked in the summer months in the Paris building sites were ideal carriers of propaganda – printed or oral.

Frequently Dem-Soc activists in *bourgs* acted as correspondents for radical newspapers published in nearby towns whose editors, such as Esquiros of the *Voix du Peuple* of Marseilles, would tour workers' and peasant cafés and *chambrées* in the Midi. Newspaper salesmen were often sacked working-class militants such as Arimbide who had led the 1845 Toulon dockyard strike. Of the 26 known local correspondents of the *Démocrate du Var*, ten were artisans. Many such men became leaders of secret societies which mushroomed in central and southern France in 1850–1 and which often doubled as mutual aid societies.

Was the dominant tone of Dem-Soc propaganda, as Berenson argues, that of

fraternalist associationism, with 'socialism' defined as applied Christian brotherhood? In this way it continued the 'religiosity' of much radical discourse since the 1830s. Laponneraye praised Christ as 'emancipator of humanity in the here and now'. One paper was entitled 'Le Christ Républicain'. The figure of Christ the Carpenter adorned walls of carpenters' cooperatives. If Christ returned to earth, it was asserted, the party of order would jail him as a vagrant. The law of 30 May 1850, which disenfranchised over 30 per cent of the electorate (migrants, those with 'criminal' records) would, it was pointed out, have deprived Jesus of the vote. Artisans' letters to newspapers compared the Dem-Soc deputies to the apostles, persecuted martyrs who could, nevertheless, perform miracles by making the blind see. The cooperative ideal was, at heart, no more than the basic Christian adage of 'help one another'.

However whilst it would be futile to deny that such rhetoric was widespread, Berenson's characterization of Dem-Soc ideology is too monolithic. It fails to ask whether those who used this discourse themselves fully endorsed its sentiments. Joigneaux, editor of the *Feuille du Village*, did occasionally argue in his paper that Christianity was applied Christian fraternity – doubtless in the hope of counteracting party of order propaganda which denounced the 'reds' as atheistic drinkers of blood, enemies of religion and of the family. Yet Joigneaux was a radical sceptic, a scourge of the clergy and a mocker of miracles. Berenson's image of him as a Christian socialist attempting to appeal to an anti-clerical but still essentially Christian popular audience against Voltairean neo-Orleanist conservatives is simply unconvincing. The main heartlands of his influence were in Burgundy. His audience consisted of small wine-growers and small town artisans and petty-bourgeois, wheel-wrights, clog-makers, quarry-men, boatmen, carters, textile and small-metal outworkers. Burgundy had a tradition of populist radicalism derived from the bitter anti-seigneurial sentiments of the ancien regime. It had been Jacobin in the 1790s, sympathetic to Republicanism in the early 1830s and one feature of its radicalism was a virulent anti-clericalism which had broadened into religious indifference and scepticism. Religious practice was low and declining (Magraw 1978).

One must also beware of taking associationist 'socialist' rhetoric at face value. Some of those who used it were genuine socialists. But associationism had a functional use for the Dem-Soc left. It allowed moderate Republicans to express a vague sympathy for mutual aid societies or consumer cooperatives to woo popular support – whilst simultaneously preaching class conciliation and urging an alliance with progressive capitalists. 'Associationism' was all things to all men, and for some bourgeois leaders it implied social reform without class conflict. It provided a language which could create the illusion of unity to hold together a varied and amorphous movement.

It was, indeed, part of the achievement of the Dem-Socs to transcend narrow, class-based, work-obsessed issues. Those artisans who clung in 1849–51 to apolitical mutualism were clearly outside the broad left mainstream which the Dem-Soc movement came to represent. Sadly, the 1851 coup was to make a national left-wing political network impossible for two decades, thereby forcing some skilled artisans to 'retreat' into neo-Proudhonist mutualism.

The Dem-Socs in difficult circumstances, made real achievements in elections

and by-elections. Their propaganda was imaginative and resourceful. They were the precursors of those who, later in the century, argued that 'socialism' was essentially perfected Republican democracy. Nevertheless it is important to remember that their strategy and ideology did not go unopposed on the left. There was always a minority, which grew steadily in 1850–1, which argued that in the face of ongoing economic and social crisis and escalating official repression the Dem-Soc strategy was far too tame. Critical of the leadership for its bourgeois moderation, its appeal to class alliances, its electoralism, they evoked an alternative radical tradition – of insurrection, class confrontation and militant irreligion. Many such rebels came from the popular rank and file. A number of local examples will permit us to see if this can be described with any plausibility as an expression of 'working-class' disillusionment with 'bourgeois' leadership.

The Gard was not a 'typical' department. Thirty per cent of its 400,000 inhabitants were Protestant, and generations of sectarian religious strife made it the Ulster of France (Huard 1982). The Protestant bourgeois elite had, in turn, been moderate Republican in the 1790s, then Bonapartist, then Orleanist. The Protestant *petit peuple* had flirted with Jacobinism. In the 1840s the Catholic Legitimist elite still had a strong populist following amongst Catholic peasants and workers – such as the stevedores of the Rhône port of Beaucaire. The economic crisis however, caused problems for the Legitimists' popular clientele – indebted peasants and unemployed workers in the Nîmes textile industry and in coalmines such as Grand' Combes where production fell by 40 per cent. Some Legitimists – the 'White Mountain' – sought to retain their control over their followers by adopting a populist right-radical rhetoric which alarmed the more orthodox conservatives in the party. In a by-election in 1850 this split allowed the Dem-Socs to capture a seat (Huard 1975).

The Gard's working class was highly diverse. Nîmes and some smaller towns had artisanal tailoring and shoe sectors. Nîmes' 16,000 strong textile workforce was faced with cyclical and structural problems. Some of its workers were employed in mills, others were domestic outworkers. In the Cévennes hills rural spinning, weaving and raw silk production were inextricably linked with the peasant and small-town economies. Women and girls who tended silk worms on their farms worked for part of the year in mechanized spinning mills. Coalmines were expanding. Some of the 2,500 miners were local peasant-workers, others had been imported from the Dauphiné or even Italy. Iron mines facilitated the growth of modern iron-forges at Tamaris and Bessèges. The Dem-Soc movement, led at the outset by bourgeois, attracted indebted wine-growers, but also had a distinctive working-class following. Local Republicanism shifted leftwards because many of the Protestant economic elite, hitherto linked with the local anti-Legitimist, tradition, rallied to 'order' during the Second Republic out of fear of the red peril. They hoped that Bonapartism would restore stability whilst making few concessions to their Catholic rivals. In 1848–9 Republican leadership was in the hands of bourgeois professionals – lawyers, doctors, booksellers, teachers. One or two Protestant merchants and industrialists joined the Dem-Socs – either from fear of clericalism or in order to woo Protestant workers. This leadership was cautious,

moderate. It responded to the 31 May 1850 electoral law by organizing a protest petition as an alternative to 'rash' violence.

However strains within the Dem-Soc coalition became increasingly obvious as the rank and file, led by artisans, grew restive. In Nîmes the tailor Napoleon Gaillard and shoe-maker Guilhen were leading militants. During 1849 they established cooperatives in the city and set up workers' political clubs in Cevennes *bourgs*. In Anduze the left was led by hatters, in Le Vigan by a locksmith.

Until 1848 the combination of employer paternalism and of a 'new', diverse labour force ensured relative industrial peace in the coal and metal sectors. During the Second Republic, however, there were strikes in the mines and in the metal-works. A secret society was established in Bessèges and some iron-makers tried to resist the 1851 coup. However the Dem-Soc vote was patchy in mining and metal communes – as it was amongst textile-workers who contributed a few wage strikes, but little more, to the radical mobilization of these years.

The distinctive feature of the left in the Gard was the failure of the peaceful Christian-associationist rhetoric of the Dem-Soc leaders to match the mood and aspirations of their followers who often evoked the Terror of 1793–4 with nostalgic relish. In the face of bureaucratic repression in 1849–51 leadership appeals for calm fell on deaf ears. Workers questioned the viability of an electoralist strategy after the 31 May 1850 law. Their rhetoric evoked, in gruesome detail, the fate in store for reactionaries: 'In 1852 we will play nine-pin. The heads of the rich will serve as bowls, those of the priests as skittles.' This discourse – itself a mix of bravado and ironic exaggeration – is closer to that lovingly detailed in Richard Cobb's accounts of terrorists of the Year II than to that of Christian socialist associationism. All gains made by the people since 1789, it was argued, had come through insurrection, since elites made concessions only to force, not to appeals to their sense of justice. A poem found at the home of one December 1851 insurgent began:

> One day Heaven will bless Robespierre
> The Republic will have no more problems
> A spot of blood will help water our *fêtes*
> We will take pleasure in dipping our hands in it
> Oh, how sweet it is to see heads fall
> This is why I am a Republican.

Undoubtedly some militants in the Gard do approximate to Berenson's model. The Dem-Socs, despite efforts to recruit amongst Catholic workers, did best in Protestant heartlands of central Gard. Encontre, the radical bookseller whose reading-room was meeting place for Nîmes militants, was a moralizing Christian-socialist – a native of Marsillargues, a Protestant wine village to the south west of Nîmes whose radical pastor was to inspire resistance to the December coup. But many leading radicals such as Gaillard were essentially materialist-rationalists. Whilst it would be premature to portray the left in these years as secular-laic it was clearly moving in that direction. Babies born to 'red' activists were often christened 'Marat'. Club discussions frequently invoked the holy 'martyrs' of the

Year II. For many of these men faith in the Social Republic was an alternative to a Heaven which was viewed as an invention of the rich and of their priestly allies.

A network of popular political societies sprang up. In 1848–9 these were usually 'open' cafés, *chambrées*, clubs. As police harassment intensified thereafter, many went 'underground' – with an apparently harmless mutual aid society or café concealing a secret society. Cercles des Travailleurs were established in towns, bourgs and villages. That at Anduze began under the patron age of a moderate Republican landowner, but later escaped from his influence. Hatters, glove-makers and carpenters were the social base of the society in St Hippolyte, masons and metal-workers of that in Alès. One official characterized the members of such groups as 'the men with the worst reputation, the most ignorant, those most easily led to disorder'. It was from such societies that support emerged for the 'New Mountain' – a dissident Dem-Soc breakaway organization which argued that in the face of the emerging police state only secret societies prepared, in the last resort, to use violence to defeat the coming coup, could establish the Social Republic. Ninety communes in the Gard had such groups by 1851. Although the initiation rituals of these societies – oaths sworn over a dagger, blindfolds – suggest a legacy from bourgeois Carbonarism, their cadres and rank and file were essentially working-class. As Forstenzer shows, the perceptive public-prosecutor became alarmed at the danger which these societies posed, although he was also acutely conscious of the fact that police found them difficult to penetrate and that much of his information was based on hearsay, rumour and scattered 'facts' (Forstenzer 1981). He feared a rising in the whole of the Midi, with insurgents spreading the signal by hilltop bonfires. He was alarmed that sectarian feuding between Protestant and Catholic bourgeois and strategic divisions within the legitimist camp were undermining the local strength of the men of order – and saw a Bonapartist coup as the only solution.

Meanwhile the frustrations and resentments of the Dem-Soc rank and file spilled over into bloody clashes with Catholic-royalist workers and peasants – as in Beaucaire in January 1850 when the police authorized a Catholic workers' *cercle* but refused to license its 'red' rival. There was rioting and one Catholic worker was shot dead. As elsewhere in the Midi, fêtes, carnivals and funerals became the occasion for sectarian political demonstrations.

Hence political mobilization in the Gard drew into the Dem-Soc movement workers – and peasants – who, in a situation of socio-economic crisis, unemployment and low crop-prices, were reluctant to espouse the decorous, legalistic strategies of their bourgeois 'leaders'. Hence here, as elsewhere, the Dem-Soc movement was schizophrenic. Its leaders tried – in the face of a common enemy – to hold together in a single movement men of differing material situations, social backgrounds and ideological sympathies. Much of the embryonic 'labour movement' remained, clearly, under bourgeois 'patronage'. A united broad-left coalition was necessary to build up the widest possible resistance to the power of the party of order and an increasingly authoritarian state machine. Yet the experiences of the Gard show the uneasiness of many workers within such a coalition, their sense that their material interests and political preferences were being ignored.

This tendency for the Dem-Soc movement to fall apart was not confined to the Gard. In Toulouse police reported a gap between 'moderates' – professional bourgeois, petty-bourgeois, master artisans – who met in one society and 'extremists', usually journeymen, who had their own popular clubs (Aminzade 1981). Elsewhere, it is true, the hold of bourgeois leaders remained firm. In Narbonne the leadership of liberal professionals, wine-merchants and building contractors kept control of their popular followers – urban building workers, coopers, artisans and small wine-growers from the surrounding villages – down to the coup. Indeed in December 1851 when the leadership were arrested *en masse* the rank and file failed to rise in resistance to the coup because the orders to do so never came (Guthrie 1983).

Similar rifts occurred, also, in the *bourgs* and villages of central and southern France. Here the Dem-Soc popular support included many peasant-proprietors. It was made up, too, of a range of groups whose class status defies easy categorization. Their occupations, culture, residence were such that they were poised between town and countryside, between the world of the 'working class' and that of the peasantry. This was the world of quarrymen and river-boatmen, of lumbermen and charcoal-burners, of village wheel-wrights, cobblers and blacksmiths, of rural clog-makers and wood-floaters, of cork- and barrel-makers and of itinerant seasonal migrants, of textile out-workers and wood-forge operators. Many, but not all, of these owned or farmed small plots of land. Some are more accurately defined as 'workers' than others. What is clear is that no real understanding of the Dem-Soc mobilization or of the fears it engendered in the elites, is possible if their role is ignored. Because they are beyond (easy) categorization there is a danger that the social historian of 'the working class' – as of 'the peasantry' – will let them slip through the interstices of history.

One such group were the cork-workers of Garde-Freinet (Var) – a Provençal *bourg* in a region where disputes over wine taxes and communal rights and the 'democratic patronage' of Republican lawyers had radicalized sections of the peasantry (Agulhon 1982). In the 1830s there had been strikes in the cork and barrel industry as entrepreneurs concentrated production and cut wages. At that stage the resentments of Catholic workers against Orleanist employers might well have fuelled the type of populist Legitimism which was always one option for Midi workers. Instead the influence of young bourgeois radicals, who had picked up socialist ideas in Paris, pushed the embryonic worker movement towards secular radicalism. A mutual aid society was established. In 1849 the Dem-Socs won 60 per cent of the vote and the lawyer Mathieu became mayor. Nine municipal councillors were cork-workers. They employed a secular schoolteacher, cut the salary of the *curé* and sought to reassert control over communal woodlands. As their example spread to surrounding forest communes the alarmed authorities sacked Mathieu, who fled to avoid arrest.

The culture of Garde-Freinet radicalism was idiosyncratic, not least because of the militancy of women, some of whom were employed in the cork factories. The subprefect was outraged by females 'who have all the qualities necessary to take over from the *tricoteuses* of 1793'. They conformed neither to stereotypes of their sex as 'docile' or conservative, nor to Berenson's image of supporters of a Christian

social gospel. They agreed to 'christen' their offspring 'Blanqui' or 'Garibaldi' – or to give them pagan or animal names. They banned their children from attending catechism and 'one of them parodying the liturgies of the saints, taught her son to add to the name of the Virgin epithets which the pen refuses to write'. As the counter-revolution gathered pace with the dissolution of the *bourg*'s National Guard, cork-workers established a cooperative, sending out commercial travellers to seek orders. By 1851 even such a peaceful venture was denounced as subversive. The radical municipality was dissolved, the club which ran the coop disbanded – with nine of its leaders jailed for organizing a 'secret society'. Angry workers ignored calls by bourgeois Republicans to accept these blows with stoic passivity. In December 1851 the *bourg* was a centre of resistance to the coup. 136 of the 210 arrested insurgents were barrel-makers.

The wood-floaters of the river Yonne, who floated logs downstream to Paris from the forests of Burgundy, were another group who resisted the coup (Martinet 1975). Their turbulence was not new. They were the sons and grandsons of men who had imbibed *sans-culotte* ideas in the Year II. In the post–1794 Thermidorian reaction one activist had taken refuge in the forests before being shot in a gun battle by the police. The Second Republic proved to be the apogee of *flotteur* militancy, since the railway killed their industry thereafter. Their bastion was the town of Clamecy (Nièvre) where 500 *flotteurs* lived. Their occupation bred a sense of solidarity. It was a skilled, hazardous job performed by mutually dependent teams. They alternated periods of exhausting activity with long dead seasons. They were under growing pressure as the number of logs began to decline and as they were squeezed between the forest-owners, the floating company and Paris wood-merchants. Wages were squeezed as employers tried to disperse the logs away from Clamecy, viewed as a hotbed of industrial militancy. High food prices in 1846–7 were followed by lay-offs in 1848–9.

Already in 1841 one merchant had suggested building gun emplacements in the four corners of Clamecy to mow down the *flotteurs* in any future unrest. Their wives were notorious for bringing up their children to hear incessant 'insults against . . . the respectable and the well-to-do'. Yet despite conservatives' tirades against their brutality, their political consciousness was high. During riotous demonstrations in 1837 against shopkeeper weights-and-measures fraud they wore red insignia and sang the 'Marseillaise'. In the 1841 strike they voiced sophisticated demands for collective contracts and union organization rights. They wanted a ban on hazardous night work for – adapting the Lyon *canut* slogan – they preferred to 'die without working than to be killed at work'. Their regular contacts with Paris gave them wide horizons.

During the Second Republic the initial Republican committee – a doctor, a chemist, a banker – was soon outflanked by a revolutionary club, which became a secret society. Its 'leader', Milletot, was a judge at a local commercial court, a Christian socialist who urged his popular followers in December 1851 to avoid pillage – 'for probity is the first virtue of a Republican'. However, unlike many fellow bourgeois radicals, he had become convinced that the inevitable coup should be resisted by force and had sought recruits in the surrounding countryside amongst peasants and artisans – 'all the rabble of the *pays* from a distance of 10

Leagues', according to the police. The insurrection was suppressed ferociously, 'The Army officers believe they are in Africa', commented the public prosecutor. Seven insurgents received death sentences, 22 were deported. Milletot died in Cayenne. Bonapartist propaganda recounted atrocity stories of the insurgents who, it was claimed, danced round the dying bodies of *gendarmes*. But they had risen in the name of the 'Social Republic'. Ninety-four *flotteurs* were arrested, along with 2–300 village artisans and 75 peasants. These men were neither the brutal rabble of conservative mythology nor the loyal followers of social-Christian Republican *notables* for, unlike Milletot, most of the latter had distanced themselves from the popular societies in 1850–1. At one meeting of the popular club in early 1851 a *flotteur* accused Guerbert, a middle-class Republican, of having become increasingly 'timorous' after having been earlier amongst the 'most advanced'.

The *flotteurs*' endemic 'turbulence' was blamed by the authorities on their geographic mobility, which put them in contact with Paris. Any such migrants, indeed, were viewed with particular suspicion because they were seen as picking up dangerous ideas and, worse still, 'infecting' settled populations with whom they came into contact. Prefects in the south east blamed the 'red' vote in the departments round Lyon on contact with city journeymen who tramped through the countryside or did harvest work. Hence Lyon was 'the key to the disorder in the entire East'. Burgundian radicalism was attributed to its geographic situation – on the artisan 'tramping' route between Paris and Lyon. Pierre Dupont, whose radical songs were very popular in the Second Republic, was the son of a Lyon artisan with rural roots. The workers of textile towns in lower Languedoc such as Bédarieux and Clermont regularly did harvest work in the vineyards. Limousin clergy and notables deplored the cultural influence of the peasant-stonemasons who brought back from Paris, it was claimed, irreligion, radical pamphlets, birth-control practices, venereal diseases and a taste for urban luxuries (Corbin 1975). The Lyon *canut* slogan 'live working or die fighting' appeared on a banner in a Limousin village demonstration in defence of communal rights. Many of the migrants were involved in the June Days. Nadaud, their most prominent activist, became a Dem-Soc deputy – and former mason Jean Petit set up a popular library in his village. In the Haute-Vienne, where only 10 per cent of conscripts were literate, 40 per cent of migrants could read and write. Local authorities tried to reassure themselves, however, by arguing that migrants remained divided amongst themselves by feuds between 'Parisians' and 'Lyonnais' and that, in the last resort, their deepest aspiration was to save money and invest it in land and that, thus, they would never really espouse communist 'utopias'.

Boatmen, too, were highly suspect. Marcilhacy has emphasized their role in the Val de Loire in disseminating Dem-Soc ideas (Marcilhacy 1959). The public-prosecutor of Grenoble expressed alarm at the 'turbulent behaviour' of Rhône boatmen who kept the villages and towns of the river valley 'in constant relation with the Lyon population'. Often these groups felt threatened by the advent of the railway and were thus enthusiastic Luddites.

THE AGONY OF THE REPUBLIC: THE REPRESSION OF THE POPULAR MOVEMENT

The defeat of the workers' movement, and of the broader Dem-Soc left, can be explained in a number of ways. Perhaps the working class – for all its precocious militancy and impressive mobilization – remained too much of a minority, too heterogeneous, too fragmented in its structures, interests, levels of consciousness and its culture. It could appear locally formidable – but only for brief periods in a limited number of dispersed industrial regions. Possibly it 'peaked' too soon, in mid 1848, – so that it was already in retreat by the time the Dem-Socs began to mobilize rural and small-town France in 1849. Arguably the revival of parts of the industrial economy in 1849–50 (Nord textiles; Paris construction) dulled the edge of the economic and social tensions engendered by the post–1845 Depression. Even though industrial recovery remained patchy, vulnerable to the erosion of business confidence caused by fears of a 'red' election victory in 1852, food supplies had recovered, urban death rates were falling.

The elites retained a variety of ways of exerting social control. Although the Depression squeezed profits, many industrial companies were able to exhibit their 'benevolence' subsidised food provision. Nadaud, campaigning in his native Creuse, was chased out of Aubusson by textile-workers loyal to their philanthropic employer. The absence of secret ballots allowed employers such as vineyard-owners round Narbonne to keep surveillance of polling booths to intimidate or bribe their workers to vote for conservative candidates – though not dissimilar pressures were exerted by 'democratic' notables such as wine-merchants and building-contractors over coopers and building-workers in the same town.

Moreover, although municipal job-creation schemes, private charitable donations, state encouragement of orders from local industry were all 'palliatives', they could dull social protest in some areas.

Workers faced a barrage of ideological propaganda from the Party of Order which financed a stream of pamphlets, *almanachs* and brochures. Many of these were designed to appeal to provincial petty-bourgeois and peasant-owners fears that urban socialists were threatening to confiscate all private property and return France to the horrors of the Terror. The eagerness of provincial National Guards to rush to Paris to massacre the June insurgents bore witness to the potential of such propaganda. But the clergy's crusade against godless reds could strike a chord amongst Catholic workers in towns like Tourcoing, and Catholic royalism retained its popular urban clientele in the Gard or in the Tarn wool town Mazamet, even if its hold was waning in Toulouse or Marseilles. Other workers doubtless responded to the argument that economic recovery – and hence jobs – were reliant on a return of business confidence via the establishment of political stability.

Moreover, the right had a further major trump card. Whilst many workers – and peasants – remained suspicious of neo-feudal clerical Legitimism or plutocratic Orleanism their unsophisticated populist radicalism remained susceptible to the lure of Bonapartism. As Lévêque and Vigier have shown, many peasants in Burgundy and the Alpine south east voted for Bonaparte in the December 1848 presidential elections. They proceeded to vote Dem-Soc in May 1849 because the

government had done little to offer remedies for rural grievances (wine taxes, forest codes; indebtedness to usurers). Yet many continued to blame reactionary governmental policies on royalist ministers whilst preserving their image of Louis Napoleon as the people's friend. Urban working-class Bonapartism was less deep-rooted. Yet some June insurgents had carried Bonapartist banners. Copies of Louis Napoleon's *Extinction of Pauperism* were circulated in popular *quartiers*. Bonapartist agents were adept at using songs and lithographs to portray their leader's social concerns. And if Bonaparte remained widely hated in such politically sophisticated towns as Lyon, elsewhere he was often regarded as a hero – particularly in the Pas-de-Calais or Troyes, where he was contrasted with Cavaignac, the 'June butcher' who was supported by some moderate Republican industrialists. Throughout 1849–51 Bonaparte was able to distance himself from those aspects of his own ministers' policies – the Roman expedition, the Falloux Law, the May 1850 franchise law, – which most offended workers. On his propaganda tours he made coded, vague promises to restore universal suffrage whilst promising that if only he had full control of government he would guarantee jobs.

Clearly, the 1851 coup and subsequent brutal repression made the image of the 'people's Emperor' difficult to sustain. Workers' votes in the subsequent plebiscite or in the 1852 elections are difficult to accept at face value since many workers may well have voted Bonapartist under duress, in order to try to prevent further local repression and arrests. Yet in 1852, as the economy picked up, there were signs of working-class enthusiasm in Toulouse, Grenoble, Rheims – helped by the new régime's populist gestures such as confiscating and distributing Orleanist family property. Only the red rural Midi scene of the bitterest repression, appeared totally hostile (Menager 1988).

However, as Merriman has argued, the demobilization of the left in 1849–51 should be viewed in the context of sustained bureaucratic repression of all its activities – of which the coup was merely the final, logical climax (Merriman 1978). The effectiveness of this repression is debatable. Margadant has claimed that partial repression attempted by thinly spread police and *gendarmerie* forces in the Midi and central France proved counter-productive, inciting as much opposition as it suppressed. Peasant and village artisans, it is claimed, mobilized to defend their newly won democratic rights. Departments such as the Vaucluse or the Hérault which had been subjected to the most irritating petty persecution of their municipal councils, teachers, café sociability and carnivals proved to be in the vanguard of resistance to the coup. Forstenzer's study of 'bureaucrats under stress' argues that prefects and public-prosecutors felt that they were losing the battle against the occult socialist army of the shadows as a plague of radical doctors, café-owners, migrant workers, colporteurs and teachers carried their 'disease' into hitherto healthy communities. Only major surgery – a clinical coup d'état – could stop France from succumbing to the gangrene. Authoritarian-conservative bureaucrats, he argues, developed a 'front-soldier mentality'. Rather than 'inventing' a red peril to give spurious justification for a military coup, they became subjectively convinced that the red peril was real and that the chances of a Dem-Soc triumph in 1852 were dangerously high.

Merriman's thesis is more nuanced. The prerequisites for an effective radical

political movement were national leadership, local cadres and militants, and local communities with grievances and solidarities. Sustained, if partial, repression did not destroy any of these. But it did render effective communication between these 'levels' difficult and the functioning of the Dem-Soc 'party' highly problematic (Merriman 1979). Resistance to the coup would have been more widespread had not repression already 'demobilized' many 'red' regions – particularly urban, industrial areas. In the Yonne the original Dem-Soc penetration had been amongst artisans in towns like Joigny and Sens. From there propaganda had spread to peasants, foresters, rural artisans. By 1851, however, the urban left had already been decapitated, leaving the rural areas isolated in the December 1851 insurrection.

To analyse the impact of state harassment of urban, industrial France we will concentrate first on some of the targets of repression, then on the demobilization of some working-class bastions.

The Dem-Soc press bore the brunt of the assault. Its proliferation into at least 56 departments had been a major factor in the popular mobilization. A Yonne wheelwright, on trial after the coup, said 'If I participated in politics it was after I read the newspaper.' He subscribed to one radical paper, his friend the clog-maker to another. Offices of newspapers often acted as headquarters for local political organizations. The papers themselves usually followed similar formats. They had a political editorial, some foreign, and national political coverage, local news – some political, some 'human interest'. They had features on local economic problems, a column for readers' letters and a *feuilleton* – a serialized story, often with a social message.

Part of the campaign of bureaucratic harassment targeted those who distributed newspapers – migrant workers, tramping artisans, colporteurs, itinerant actors and musicians. The colportage laws were tightened up in 1849. Printing firms who published Dem-Soc material were intimidated. Newspaper editors themselves faced the payment of caution money and increasingly frequent prosecution – even though many proved resilient and revived their papers under new names.

Cafés where Dem-Soc propaganda – written and verbal – was disseminated, came under close scrutiny. Many were closed down or subject to curfew. The 722 cafes in and around St Etienne were, according to General Castellane the local military commander, the location of nightly indoctrination for thousands of workers. Often *cafetiers* in industrial towns were sacked ex-workers, and in the rural Midi they often shared the hostility of their *vigneron* and barrel-making clients to the wine tax. A total of 922 *cafetiers* were arrested after the coup, but many had been jailed or forced out of business earlier. Popular fêtes and carnivals, too, were suspect as occasions for popular expressionist protest – as in the Nord carnival in 1849 when dummy figures of Louis Napoleon were mocked and burned. In the Lyonnais funeral processions of more than 300 mourners were banned because they could become political – and also anti-clerical – demonstrations. 'Only '93 are needed to do our job' retorted one St Etienne worker – invoking the Year II. Dances at which the band played 'subversive' tunes began to attract police attention too.

By 1849 in most towns, workers had been ousted from the National Guard. But

left-wing successes in the autumn of 1849 municipal elections raised the spectre of 'a great number of hot headed and illiterate men' entering municipal councils. Hence in 1849–51 numbers of councils were dissolved and popular mayors, who posed a danger because of their control over municipal policing, were dismissed – even jailed.

The city which received the greatest attention from the authorities was Lyon, placed under a 'state of siege' from the summer of 1849 onwards in a pre-emptive attempt to control popular mobilization. Cafés in the Croix-Rousse were shut, cooperatives harassed, houses searched. Jury trials were suspended when a Croix-Rousse jury had the effrontery to acquit the editor of a Dem-Soc newspaper. The prefect took over power from the elected mayors in working-class *quartiers*. In 1850 the city staged a show trial of 'leaders' of the New Mountain accused of participating in the Complot de Lyon to plan insurrection in the south east. A. Gent, the fastidious and elegant lawyer who was the 'head' of this plot, was perhaps too refined to be a real popular leader. 'A democrat under such a smooth exterior is not understood by our working-class population' the police claimed. No one doubted that, at heart, much of the Lyon working class remained 'red'. But two years of sustained repression had broken the back of organized resistance. The city responded quietly to the coup – though the surrounding rural departments were the scene of peasant resistance (Liebmann 1980).

Amongst the first working-class bastions to be subjected to sustained bureaucratic and military harassment was Limoges, which had been precociously militant in spring 1848. Its skilled porcelain-workers and shoe-makers had been involved in strikes and mutual aid associations during the Orleanist years. Tensions had been high there in 1846–7 with 15 per cent unemployment and working-class anger at the determination of the bourgeoisie to retain control of the National Guard which, they insisted, should be monopolized by 'honest people' rather than open to the 'inferior classes'. In spring 1848 the Limoges labour movement became highly mobilized. Radical lawyer Theo Bac became spokesman for demands for worker access to the National Guard. Porcelain workers drew up a sophisticated scheme for producer cooperatives which, they argued, alone could end 'anarchic' laissez-faire, restore some balance in labour-capital relations, secure workers some share of the fruits of their labour and some control over their workplace. In April 1848, however, the anti-Republican, anti-tax vote of the peasantry of the surrounding countryside had swamped the left-wing vote in Limoges. In their frustration workers rioted, seized the municipal council and were brought under control by the arrival of 3,000 troops. Thereafter the city was kept under tight control by the authorities, even though by 1849 the workers' movement was encouraged by the shift to the left of the local peasant vote. Armed bourgeois militia patrolled workers' *quartiers*, the popular society was banned from holding meetings, newspaper editors were prosecuted and radical print-works were shut down. Attempts of workers to subvert troops were countered by regular changes of garrison. The cooperatives staggered on into 1851, though starved of funds and subject to a 'war of pinpricks' from the police. In December 1851, although the city did not resist the coup, the coops were dissolved and 132 known radicals arrested (Merriman 1978).

Indeed cooperatives everywhere became a prime target of administrative repression – in part because they were accused of acting as a 'front' for secret political activity, in part because the principles which they embodied were viewed as in themselves immoral and subversive. As the Rhône prefect wrote, cooperatives 'carry within themselves the vices which ought to destroy them – that is to say, equality of wages, abolition of piece-rates, reciprocal solidarity of affiliates. These societies ought not to prosper at all'. However, the authorities were reluctant to leave the collapse of cooperatives to market forces, as events in Rheims indicate (Merriman 1978; Gordon 1985). In this city of 43,000 the workforce included factory-spinners, handloom-weavers and the usual range of artisanal trades. It had been a Cabetist stronghold in the 1840s, with mutual aid societies present in 21 separate trades. In 1846–8 some industrialists had supported the liberal opposition, but events of 1848 shattered their fragile alliance with the workers. There was a good deal of Luddism in the spring of 1848 by handloom-weavers and wool-combers, and clashes over worker access to the National Guard. In 1849 the Dem-Socs secured 55 per cent of the vote in the elections. They then concentrated their energies on an extensive, sophisticated producer and consumer cooperative movement under the umbrella of the Association Rémoise. This set up a cooperative bakery, producer cooperatives amongst tailors and handloomers, ran a newspaper and sent agents out to propagandize the countryside. Egged on by industrialists and private shopkeepers, who viewed the Association as an economic threat, the authorities did all they could to destroy it. Dr Bressy, an occulist who was the Association's leading figure, rashly drew attention to himself by opposing the Roman expedition. When the Association helped to support wage strikes in October 1850 it was accused of meddling in 'politics'. Bressy was deported to Algeria – where he was to die. Well before the coup the Rheims cooperative movement was disintegrating.

A similar fate befell a comparable venture in Nantes headed by the reformist Dr Guépin. Here cooperatives were dissolved on the grounds that their members had maintained written contact with Proudhon (Guin 1976). In the Nord, with fewer artisanal workers, the cooperative movement was weaker. But here too the administration targeted those who appeared capable of coordinating the popular movement. Bianchi, editor of the *Messager du Nord*, who was suspected of bringing in propaganda printed across the Belgian frontier, found himself prosecuted for supporting Anzin mine strikes and for seeking to coordinate the spinners' associations of the various textile towns. Simultaneously workers' song groups and carnival societies which had drawn attention to themselves by mocking employers and government were suppressed. Well before the coup political and industrial militancy in the region appeared well under control (Merriman 1978).

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Part III

Bonapartism and French Labour, 1851–1870

1

Bonapartism and French Labour

Tony Judt has argued that although the two decades of Bonapartist rule witnessed a surge in industrial capitalism which tilted the balance within the working class towards a 'new' proletariat of factory, iron-forge and mine, the truly significant feature of the period was political (Judt 1986). Bonapartist authoritarianism – however much this was nuanced by populist gestures and by the limited 'liberalization' of the 1860s – had a profound, long-term impact on French working-class consciousness and on the character of the labour movement. In the first place, it served to confirm the perception of militants that the state was essentially a weapon of capitalist repression. Whereas in contemporary Britain the conjunction of economic expansion and mid-Victorian liberalism encouraged the emergence – after the demise of Chartism – of a reformist, labourite, union movement, in France the outlawing of unions and the repression of worker politics deepened labour's sense of alienation and inculcated a profound mistrust of state power which, subsequently, made it difficult for the liberal Third Republic to 'integrate' organized labour. At the same time the limitation imposed on political activity had two serious consequences. On the one hand it effectively isolated workers from bourgeois Republicans, with whom they had constructed a political alliance – albeit an uneasy one – in 1848–51. On the other, it pushed some workers into forms of activity which accentuated latent internal divisions. Elements of the craft elite, denied the opportunity for open political or union organization, retreated into a 'neo-Proudhonist' stance – which, ironically, appeared to deny the relevance of state power. Although they still utilized the rhetoric of worker solidarity, their main activities centred on 'apolitical' cooperative and mutual aid societies. The number of the latter grew from 2,737 to 6,180, their membership from 255,000 to 794,000. Stripped of the ambitious goal of an 'associationist Republic' these ran the risk of becoming 'reformist', 'petty-bourgeois' enterprises – of becoming what Marx had unfairly accused them of being in the 1840s. Then such craftsmen could be seen as in the vanguard of an emerging labour movement. By the 1860s they were veering close to becoming an elitist craft 'aristocracy' whose projects were of little relevance to most journeymen – let alone to the mass of factory or women workers. In consequence when industrial and political militancy revived in the mid 1860s – as the economic boom of the early Empire faltered and as the regime's tentative and patchy 'liberalization' was perceived as a sign of growing weakness – the strike

movement had more of an industrial than an artisanal base. Leaders of the socialist opposition – some of them members of the First International – began to speak of the need to combine industrial militancy, working-class political organization and rights for women workers. Such rhetoric was anathema to the 'neo-Proudhonist', mutualist labour aristocracy. Hence the legacy of the Bonapartist decades included both a widening of the gap between workers and Republicans and of sociological and ideological fissures within the world of labour itself – even if the ferocity of the repression of the Commune and the draconian restrictions imposed on labour in its immediate aftermath served to reinforce a deep-seated mistrust of the state which became a characteristic of all sectors of the labour movement. Certain elements in Judt's analysis are open to question. His claim that the Paris Commune was isolated because it spoke for the artisanal tradition not to the new industrial working class is not easily reconciled with his own characterization of artisans as apolitical mutualists – nor with what is known of the sociological base of provincial support for the Commune in cities such as Lyon. One could argue that Bonapartism had a populist as well as a repressive face, the capacity to seduce workers as well as to cow them. Equally, one should not underestimate the capacity of the reviving Republican movement of the 1860s, despite its 'bourgeois' leadership and vague social policy, to attract working-class support. One might also claim that Judt is slightly inconsistent in arguing for the 'primacy of politics' whilst simultaneously attempting to explain the splits within the labour movement in terms of industrial developments and of sociological divisions between proletarians and the craft elite.

In short, Judt's typically stimulating thesis is of value because it raises many of the key issues which require investigation, but one should beware of accepting all of his assertions without subjecting them to closer analysis.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE WORKING CLASS

Did the Bonapartist regime coincide with – or indeed help to stimulate – an 'industrial revolution' which served to create a genuine industrial proletariat? Any answer to this question must be carefully nuanced. For while there was an obvious acceleration in the growth of 'modern' industry and clear evidence that sectors of artisanal production and of rural industry were stagnating it would be unwise to underestimate the resilience and capacity for flexible adaptation which these latter continued to exhibit. Hence their 'weight' in the industrial economy remained considerable.

The regime encouraged the completion of the national rail network begun under the July Monarchy but halted by the crises of 1846–51. This provided thousands of jobs for railway navvies, locomotive builders, construction-workers and railwaymen. The number of railway locomotives quadrupled to nearly 5,000, the number of railway wagons quintupled to 133,000. The workforce employed by the rail companies rose from 31,000 to 138,000. Inevitably this growth had important multiplier effects on the iron, steel and coal sectors. Iron production quadrupled. Annual steel production rose from 12,000 to over 1 million tons – most of it made

by the late 1860s by Bessemer and Siemens-Martin processes. The iron and steel sector was concentrated and modernized. The powerful employers' federation, the Comité des Forges, was established in 1864. Important heavy metallurgical complexes, employing thousands of workers, emerged in Valencennes, Douai, Hayange, Commentry, Vierzon, St Chamond, Terrenoire, Le Creusot.

Inevitably, the railway revolution had wider implications for the economy. By opening up the internal market it permitted regional industrial – and agricultural – specialization. By facilitating the transportation of food within France it reduced the dangers of localized shortages which had triggered off social unrest in 1846–7 although there was to be a last, albeit relatively minor, 'old-style' food crisis in 1853–4 (Price 1983a). It also threatened the survival of 'archaic' local industries which had hitherto been able to rely on transport blockages to shield them from outside competition, whether from within France or from abroad.

What impact did these developments have on the structure and geography of the working class? Older textile centres in the south – Nîmes, Lodève, Castres – declined in the face of competition from northern and eastern France. Here textile-workers were employed in larger and more mechanized mills. In Seine-Inférieure cotton-spinning output increased, but the number of mills fell from 233 to 185 in the decade after 1859. In Rheims and Roubaix wool-combing and weaving were mechanized (Fohlen 1956). The balance of the industrial economy of the St Etienne region tilted away from silk-ribbon weaving and small-scale hardware and small-arms towards steel manufacture and coalmining. In the Gard the decline of the Nîmes and Cévenol silk sector was offset by the growth of coalmining and iron and steel around Alais (Huard 1982). The large Pas-de-Calais coalfield was opened up. Across central and southern France company towns built around coal, heavy metallurgy, glass and engineering (Carmaux, Decazeville, Le Creusot, Montceau) expanded. Conversely the charcoal-based iron-forges of Champagne, Burgundy and the Ariège went into decline – as did rural textile out-work in regions such as Normandy. The triumph of the railway proved, inevitably, a disaster for many river boatmen, for riverside port-workers and for Yonne wood-floaters.

However it would be misleading to emphasize only the march of modernity. Small-scale artisanal production continued to flourish because it proved flexible enough to adapt to changing consumer demand and because France continued to have an economy orientated towards the export of quality goods – and, indeed, towards the sale of such goods to bourgeois housewives at home. The 'artisanate' was, numerically at least, in relative not in absolute decline – even though many artisans perceived their situation to be deteriorating and felt that their 'independence' was being eroded as the internal organization of their sectors changed and merchant power and control grew (Zeitlin 1985; Aminzade 1984). Similarly, rural industry's major structural crisis was to come in the 1880s not the 1860s, and textile outwork continued to flourish in many regions – around Amiens, in the Beaujolais, in the Calvados. An official enquiry in 1866 revealed that of the 4.5 million active in industry, 1.66 million were still *petit patrons*. Of the 2.93 million 'workers' only 121,000 were employed in mines and quarries, 49,000 in heavy metallurgy. The textile industry – with 825,000 workers – remained by far the largest single sector and, as already noted, many of its employees were still active

in small-scale artisanal or rural out-work production. The other major sectors were almost consumer industries where small-scale production remained the norm:

Clothing: 700,000
Building: 480,000
Food: 159,000
Small metal-work: 145,000
Ceramics: 71,000
'Luxury': 63,000
Wooden objects: 48,000
Furniture: 48,000
Leather goods: 34,000

THE GROWTH OF WORKING-CLASS OPPOSITION 1852–1870

It may be useful to distinguish three distinct phases in worker attitudes towards the Bonapartist regime. During the first, lasting until about 1857, bureaucrats tended to temper their general satisfaction with the low levels of political and industrial protest with the observation that these may have been engendered more by fear of repression than by any real improvement in workers' attitudes. Between 1857 and 1863 they became more optimistic, even daring to hope that workers were rallying to the regime. After that the tone of their reports became steadily more gloomy as the regime's concessions appeared to stimulate not the hoped-for gratitude but, instead, growing militancy (Kulstein 1962).

During the first period, police and prefects showed an obsessive concern with the tiniest shred of evidence of working-class opposition. If two-thirds of Lyon workers took the day off work on 24 February 1853 – the anniversary of the birth of the Second Republic – or if two-thirds of working-class voters in Limoges or St Etienne stayed away from the polling booths, local officials sank into despondency. When in the 1857 elections an extremely moderate Republican candidate won 56 per cent of the votes in Toulouse there was talk of the 'ease with which the socialist party regained its old influence'. However, whilst some Bonapartists still argued that the workers remained fundamentally 'red', others became more confident. Strike levels were low. Only occasionally, as at Anzin in 1855, did troops have to be used to contain industrial unrest. Perhaps, after all, workers' utopian fantasies had been destroyed by the experiences of the Second Republic so that they were coming to appreciate the economic benefits which social peace and industrial expansion could bring. The apogee of Bonapartist fortunes came in the late 1850s and early 1860s. Despite the impact of the American Civil War on some export sectors, and the threat posed to others by the influx of British imports after 1860, the overall economy was flourishing. In Rouen the prefect reported that whilst some textile magnates resented free trade and the Catholic elites feared that the regime's Italian policy was a threat to the Papacy, the dangers of notable *fronde* were offset by the Emperor's popularity in the south east. Bonapartists won

seats on the municipal council of the Croix-Rousse in Lyon. In Grenoble the funeral of a Republican notable attracted few working-class mourners.

After 1863 the tone of official reporting became steadily more pessimistic. In 1857 the government had won the election, with a massive 5.4 million to 665 thousand majority. By 1863 it was beginning to lose in almost every town of more than 40,000 inhabitants. By 1869 the regime's 4.5 million to 3 million vote victory relied almost exclusively on its continued domination of most of the peasant electorate. And even in the countryside there were disturbing trends. For whereas Bonapartism's populist image had won it sizeable support in many sometime 'red' anti-clerical areas in eastern and central France, now the centre of gravity of its rural support was shifting towards the more conservative and Catholic west – where it made gains at the expense of the Legitimists. For all its attempts at 'liberalization' its electorate was becoming increasingly right-wing (Menager 1988).

Just as worrying were trends in industrial relations. The legalization of strikes in 1864 had not, as hoped, served to 'normalize' labour relations but instead stimulated an upsurge of disputes. Between 1867–70 there was an unprecedented strike wave involving workers in cities, factory and company towns, skilled and unskilled workers, women as well as men (Perrot 1974). Prefects offered varying explanations for these alarming developments. Some blamed the concessions made since the early 1860s and advocated a return to tougher policies. Some blamed the economic slump of 1867–8 and the general slowdown of the economic expansion, made worse by the way in which the uncertainties of foreign policy disturbed business confidence. Others pointed to the way in which the Italian and free trade policies had provoked damaging divisions between the neo-royalist elites and the regime.

Much of the remainder of the chapter will seek to analyse the varieties of working-class protest. There is no single key which offers a simple explanation of workers' militancy – or the lack of it. Local political and cultural traditions, the nature of the labour force, the impact of recent technological change, the differential effects of free trade or the American war on employment prospects all played a part. So too did the labour strategies or political and cultural attitudes of the *patronat* and the personal attitudes of local prefects. Workers might for example, be staunch Catholics, Protestants or anti-clericals – working for Catholic, Protestant, Jewish or Voltairean employers whose political sympathies might be Bonapartist, neo-Orleanist, Legitimist or Republican. Local bureaucrats whose role was to try to arbitrate in industrial disputes might be conservatives, authoritarians or Bonapartist populists. Hence there was considerable scope for a wide range of permutations in the triangular relationship between workers, employers and local bureaucrats. Assessing workers' opinions from election results is by no means straightforward. After 1851, parliamentary constituencies were gerrymandered in order to ensure, wherever possible, that any stubborn islands of working-class radical electors would be drowned by the wave of loyal peasant votes.

Furthermore, towns clearly contained non-working-class voters, whilst the 'rural' electorate included many industrial out-workers. The ballot was by no means always secret. Did the conservative voting of workers in a company town really reflect their opinions – or their fear of dismissal? Was abstentionism a sign of

apathy, or cynical disillusionment with politics – or a calculated snub to the entire political system reflecting covert opposition? Nevertheless, the electoral sociology of these decades can be revealing, if treated with due care. In the 1850s two distinct types of Bonapartist working-class voting can be discerned (Menager 1981). The first can be categorized as indicating quite strong support for the regime. In the Pas-de-Calais – the 'Corsica of the north' – coalminers, dock-workers and rural textile-workers voted heavily Bonapartist. The regime appeared popular, too, in much of eastern France – Aube, Marne, Alsace-Lorraine. In Lorraine, for example, workers voted for pro-Bonapartist paternalist employers like Wendel. In the south the regime found workers' votes more elusive – but did well in towns like Mazamet (Tarn) where the Catholic wool-workers regarded Republicanism as a heresy associated with local Protestant employers (Cazals 1978).

More encouraging for the regime was its ability to win electoral support in areas where workers had voted for the left in 1849. Although the porcelain-workers of Limoges remained incorrigibly 'socialist', the peasant-masons from the Limousin countryside appeared to be won over by the Parisian building boom (Corbin 1975). Loire coalminers' voted Bonapartist in recognition for the Emperor's support for their crusade against the CML monopoly. In the Nord miners at Anzin who often voted 'red' in local elections, tended to vote Bonapartist in national elections as a gesture against their 'Orleanist' employers. Whether the regime could retain such new admirers in the event of an economic downturn or if it was forced to send troops to control a strike remained an open question.

By the late 1860s Bonapartism was clearly losing ground in almost all industrial regions. There was isolated exception to this overall trend. In 1869 it achieved encouraging results in a number of isolated areas. In Mulhouse textile-workers voted Bonapartist as a gesture against their Protestant – often Republican – employers. Conversely, the popularity of the St Simonian Bonapartist manager Mony caused Allier metal-workers to vote for the official candidate (Menager 1983). In eastern France (Champagne, Lorraine, Ardennes) the regime benefited from the popular nationalist sentiments of a frontier region. The smaller Nord textile towns were infertile ground for the opposition. But Lille and Roubaix were voting solidly Republican – as were other factory-texile towns such as Rouen, Rheims, Roanne, Elbeuf, St Quentin. The regime never derived much comfort from electoral results in Paris, Marseilles or Lyon. But by 1869 – as in the Second Republic – the pernicious influence of the latter appeared to be spreading into the Saône-et-Loire, the Stephenois region and into the industrial centres of the Isère – a department where the prefectoral authorities lost that sure populist touch which they showed in the 1850s. The worsening economic climate doubtless contributed to this situation. The railway and building booms had run out of steam. The American war had disrupted export markets. Free trade was resented because it led to import penetration which threatened textile centres. The regime's foreign policy failures and the threat from Prussia weakened business confidence. And in 1867–8 there was a cyclical economic downturn. Yet it is not easy to draw any simple correlations between these economic difficulties and workers' political attitudes or levels of industrial militancy. Unemployment and wage cuts seem to have

radicalized textile-workers in the Seine-Inférieure and the Vosges. Yet employment levels and wages held up better in the south east – which was strongly radical – than in the Ardennes or Lorraine, where workers continued to vote Bonapartist. The 76 strikes of 1867 were often defensive strikes against wage cuts or lay-offs. But in 1869, with the economy reviving from the cyclical depression, there were 79 strikes – many of them 'offensive'. And the average strike in 1869 involved 760 workers, nearly double the average for 1867, and the highest annual average figure recorded before the strikes of 1919 (Perrot 1974). The militancy of 1869 had, in short, more to do with workers' wider political perceptions than with the short-term situation of their specific industries. One factor in this was resentment at the role of prefects in bringing in troops to control industrial disputes. In Roubaix in 1867 wool workers who came out on strike to protest at being forced to operate two looms began by shouting 'Vive l'Empereur' and by looking to prefect Mouzard for assistance. Use of troops may explain the subsequent opposition vote in the city in 1869 (Menager 1983). Similarly, the role of the army in the Loire coalfields in 1869, or at Le Creusot, whilst effective in breaking strikes, did little for the image of the 'people's Emperor'.

BONAPARTIST POPULISM

In the last resort the Bonapartist regime was an authoritarian dictatorship, supported by some sections of the elite, and reluctantly tolerated by others, because it had saved society from the red spectre. Thousands of those arrested after the coup spent years in jail or exile. During the 1850s opposition activities were severely curtailed. Workers had no right to form unions, strike leaders were arrested. The restoration of universal suffrage was accompanied by a reduction of two-thirds in the number of parliamentary constituencies and systematic gerrymandering. The weight of the bureaucracy was thrown behind official candidates or favoured notables to ensure that the popular electorate voted 'correctly'. The press was censored, municipal councils were still elected – but mayors of larger communes were government nominees and all effective municipal autonomy was abolished in Paris and in 'red' *quartiers* of cities like Lyon.

Despite the relatively passive working-class response to the coup, workers remained the section of society least enamoured of the new regime. The former urban bastions of the Dem-Socs remained the most intransigent centres of opposition voting, even before the revival of organized opposition in the late 1860s. Yet repression is not the only key to the stability of the Bonapartist regime. Much more effectively than their Orleanist predecessors, Bonapartists used propaganda directed at the workers – and at the peasantry (Kulstein 1969). This concentrated, essentially, on two major messages. The first was that, by bringing political stability, the Empire had boosted business confidence which, in turn, meant economic expansion and full employment. The second was that, unlike his predecessors, Louis Napoleon was a 'social' ruler, independent of the economic elites, genuinely concerned to ameliorate workers' conditions, and committed to social reform and to using state power not to repress but to assist popular aspirations.

Economic Prosperity

The Bonapartist regime was not immune to cyclical economic fluctuations, and it would be misleading to portray it as presiding over two decades of prosperity. There were slumps in 1853–6 and 1867–8. The American Civil War hit exports. The railway revolution and free trade stimulated economic modernization – but at the expense of structural crises in industries and regions which found it difficult to adapt. The rail link between Lyon and Marseilles, for example, had a disastrous impact on the hitherto flourishing Rhône river port at Beaucaire whose dockers faced redundancy and whose trade fair declined (Huard 1982). Yet the Bonapartist years were clearly years of relatively high employment. Bonapartist propaganda made much of this. The official newspaper in Marseilles in 1869 boasted of '17 years of prosperity'. J.-F. Franquet's Bonapartist song, 'Le chant des ouvriers', contained the verse

Industry, commerce
Will soon flower again
Let talent exercise itself
And our ills will disappear
It's His desire
To see France succeed everywhere.
(Menager 1988)

Until the early 1860s rail construction and urban renewal created thousands of jobs in building, metallurgy, coal. In the 1850s one in five Parisian workers were employed in the construction industry (Pinkney 1958). Peasant migrants from the Limousin found years of steady employment, which enabled them to save money to consolidate their small farms. The edge of their radicalism was dulled. The rural Limousin, a 'red' stronghold in 1849, voted solidly Bonapartist. The former Dem-Soc leader, Martin Nadaud, now exiled in England, was saddened by the political fickleness of his former colleagues (Corbin 1975).

When cyclical unemployment or the vagaries of international markets hit major regional industries the regime made much of its willingness to intervene. Faced with silk depression in Lyon in the late 1850s public works expenditure in the city was increased, and government orders for silk flags were made to the *fabrique*. The Empress ordered the court to increase its orders for silk dresses! (Sheridan 1979).

Wage statistics are too incomplete and widely varied to offer any clear evidence about trends in real wages. G. Duveau argued that, overall, rises in nominal wages were offset by price rises – particularly in the 1860s – and that the Bonapartist period could best be summed up as a period of more or less stagnant real wages but of soaring profits. Nominal wage rises of up to 40 per cent in Paris were, he claims, more than cancelled out by 45 per cent price and rent rises. Possibly there was a slight increase in real wages in parts of the north, north west and south east. We have runs of national nominal wages for some sectors – textiles, mines – but these take little account of regional variations, short-time working, or the amount of food grown by workers on allotments (Duveau 1946).

What is clear is that the transport revolution ensured that the near-famine conditions of 1845–7 would not be repeated. There was one final subsistence crisis in 1853–4, before the completion of the rail network. This provoked the familiar localized protests in grain-deficit areas and some anti-government rhetoric. In the Nord a government decree insisted that scarce grain go to working-class consumers and not to big distillers. Thereafter, the food situation improved. Haussmann, the Paris prefect, subsidized bakers in order to keep bread prices down in years of poor harvests – a pragmatic modification of his free-market philosophy designed to prevent popular unrest in the rapidly growing capital (Price 1983a).

SOCIAL CAESARISM

Aware that Orleanism had been undermined by its apparent indifference to the 'social question', Bonapartism relied, to an extent unparallelled in contemporary Europe, on the cultivation of an image of itself as a regime concerned with workers' conditions (Kulstein 1969; Menager 1988). The term 'labouring classes' appeared so frequently in Bonapartist rhetoric, observed the conservative historian de la Gorce, that one has the impression that the Second Empire invented it. Louis Napoleon had taken pains to portray himself as the workers' friend before 1848. 'The role of the Bonapartes', he had claimed, 'is to present themselves as the friends of all: they are the mediators, the conciliators.' From Ham prison he had proclaimed, 'We can only govern with the masses; the age of castes is over.' In a letter to *L'Atelier* he referred to his uncle as 'the people's king'. He had corresponded with Louis Blanc, sending him an autographed copy of his *Extinction of Pauperism*. In the summer of 1848, Bonapartist pamphlets distributed in the national workshops had denounced the 'aristocracy of money'. After the June Days Louis Napoleon had sought to distance himself from Cavaignac's repression and urged clemency for the arrested insurgents. His gift for persuading those to whom he spoke of his sincerity was even exercised on Proudhon, who was briefly half-convinced that he had a real desire for social change.

To a remarkable extent, he sustained this image. His tours – frequent in the 1850s, but curtailed by his ill-health thereafter – included visits to industrial regions. In Lyon in 1852 he informed workers' delegates that he had come to study their problems. In the same city seven years later he was gratified by a show of worker support for his campaign to 'liberate Italy'. He visited cholera victims in Amiens (1866) model worker-housing projects in Roubaix (1867) and in the same year, on a tour of the south east he awarded the Legion d'Honneur to St Etienne pitmen and pardoned jailed Lyon strikers. Not all the enthusiasm of the crowds who cheered him was entirely spontaneous. One police expenditure file in Lyon reads, 'To cheerleaders, for crying *Vive L'Empereur*, 229 francs'! But there was a genuine popular involvement in the official fetes (e.g. 15 August) which the regime promoted. 'The people love fêtes, and fêtes which are provided for them revive sympathy for whoever is the subject of them', noted one bureaucrat. To a limited degree, the regime replaced the anarchic spontaneity of the pre–1848

urban carnival by more decorous, planned state-sponsored festivities of the sort that the Third Republic was to perfect on 14 July (Faure 1978).

One of Louis Napoleon's trump cards was his priceless ability to somehow stand apart from the actions of his own ministers, to take credit for successes but to remain untainted by the more controversial consequences of policy decisions. Bonapartist ministers were often neo-Orleanist, financiers and businessmen who were staunch advocates of market economics. Yet somehow the Emperor himself retained his populist credentials. In 1852 he received a petition against the Loire coal monopoly from miners – and in 1854 actually made a gesture of response by splitting it up into four smaller firms (Guillaume 1966). He took personal credit in 1852–3 for amnesties for victims of the coup. During Haussmann's rebuilding of Paris the Emperor made it known that Hotel-Dieu hospital ought to be given priority over the Opera. 'It is important to me that the monument dedicated to pleasure does not rise before the shelter for the suffering.' As Marx had commented in 1852 'he would like to steal the whole of France in order to make a present of her to France'.

However, Bonapartist populism required a broader base than the myth of the benevolent Emperor. Manipulation of popular opinion required a constant barrage of propaganda in a period when the newspaper audience was expanding rapidly. The suppression of the opposition press after the coup gave the regime a head start and it continued to rely, in part, on the sheer volume of the official press. Even in the 'liberal' Empire of the late 1860s one survey found that of 270 provincial papers, 222 were Bonapartist, only eight Republican. By the early 1860s cheap editions of official newspapers were published to reach a wider audience, and the new 'apolitical' popular newspapers such as the *Petit Journal* (circulation 250,000) could be relied upon to mix their sensationalism and human interest stories with anti-socialist views. Much more subtle, was the effort made to ensure that newspapers ostensibly critical of the regime were amenable to government pressure. Apparently reluctant praise for Bonapartist achievements was more persuasive to sceptical working-class readers if it appeared in 'opposition' editorials. *Le Progrès* of Lyon was 'radical for the public' but, in fact, open to 'arrangements' with the authorities. Much of the regime's secret funding was spent buying influence in the press. By the late 1860s the ex-Republican Clement Duvernois received subsidy for his *Le Peuple Français* which praised the regime's 'socialist' goals.

Wall posters and pamphlets aimed at popular audiences were also financed. In 1852 wall posters appeared publicizing the fact that the regime had confiscated Orleanist family property and was distributing the proceeds amongst the poor. Cheap editions of *Extinction of Pauperism* were reprinted. Bonapartist *almanachs* were distributed by colporteurs and contained glowing accounts of the Emperor's provincial tours and the Paris Expositions, symbols of France's new industrial prosperity. The ever-popular *images d'Epinal* portrayed the Bonapartes as the guarantors of the authentic achievements of 1789 – equality without egalitarian excesses, national honour without needless wars, religion without intolerance. Songs such as 'Le chant des ouvriers' proclaimed that the working class were well aware of the benefits which the regime had brought:

Good-for-nothings want to pillage France
Cajoling the worker with their big words
They hope by flattering his suffering
To give him arms – and shut down the workshop.
We want no more than an honest wage. Rich,
you can keep your honours and your wealth.

Louis Napoleon planned to write a novel in which a Frenchman returns from the USA expecting to find a poverty-stricken police state, only to discover a land of prosperity, universal suffrage and benevolent projects for workers who (after 1864) enjoy the right to strike.

However, such propaganda was unlikely to win over sceptical workers unless supported by more tangible action. The regime thus made efforts to present itself both as the impartial arbitrator of industrial disputes and the sponsor of social projects. Prefects were instructed to appear, where possible, neutral in labour conflicts. There was a problem here, because, whilst some prefects were convinced populists, many were essentially conservative royalists by background and inclination, and tended, automatically, to side with local notables. Amongst the most successful 'left Bonapartist' bureaucrats was Marlière who, in 1863, wooed Anzin miners against the neo-Orleanist election candidate Thiers and who later was sent to Saône-et-Loire to placate labour unrest at Le Creusot. Others had more troubled careers. Bérard, prefect of the Isère, was sacked for alienating powerful local industrial interests.

Nevertheless, there were instances in which bureaucrats appeared to act sympathetically towards labour. Major industrial firms such as Anzin and Le Creusot denounced local subprefects for siding with workers in labour disputes. In 1866 St Etienne miners paraded outside the residence of the Loire prefect as a gesture of thanks for his support for their demands for control of mutual aid funds. The regime, under a decree of March 1852, expressed its willingness to provide financial aid to mutual aid societies and cooperatives, provided that these included notables on their management committees and accepted that they should abandon 'utopian' goals and limit their aspirations to encouragement of thrift and self-help within a capitalist economy: 'The authorities should remain vigilant so that mutual aid societies between workers do not become, in the hands of agitators, powerful instruments of disorder', warned the Paris public prosecutor.

The Emperor showed enthusiasm for a range of social projects: 'May [the workers] repay in affection and gratitude . . . all the benefits which the paternal solicitude of the Emperor . . . realizes for them' said the Interior Minister on the occasion of the opening of a convalescent home for sick workers in Vincennes. Tenants of the government-sponsored Cité Napoléon housing project in Paris were urged to show gratitude by voting Bonapartist in 1857.

Yet this approach smacked too much of paternalism to be acceptable to many workers. As the Bonapartist, former Republican, Alfred Darimon remarked, 'They were lulling the proletariat to sleep . . . by . . . philanthropic institutions which they portrayed to the worker as the only means of ameliorating his fate.' During the 1860s the tone of Bonapartist rhetoric changed. The regime had alienated sections

of its elite supporters because of its free trade and Italian policies – and faced opposition from business and Catholic notables. It adjusted by shifting 'leftward' by, for example, appointing anti-clerical Duruy as Education Minister. It sought, simultaneously, to woo the more radical and sophisticated elements of the working class. Prince Jérome Bonaparte argued that long-term integration of the proletariat required some concessions to workers' desire not merely to run their own mutual aid societies but, more controversially, to have the right to strike and form trade unions (Kulstein 1964). He thus made contact with Parisian artisan radicals such as the printer Coutant, a former contributor to the *Ruche Populaire*, and with some maverick leftists such as Armand Lévy, an ex-Dem-Soc lawyer. These 'converts' were persuaded to contribute to propaganda which admitted that the Empire had made mistakes, had not yet solved the social question, but that 'good or bad – [it] exists'. Real worker independence 'consists not merely of criticizing the bad, but of approving the good, of being satisfied with the possible'. A series of brochures written by artisans – such as A. Bazin's 1865 *L'Opposition, le Gouvernement et la Classe Ouvrière* – argued that any conceivable alternative to the regime would be worse. Orleanism was a regime of financiers, the Republicans had betrayed the workers in 1848 and were interested only in using the workers to achieve narrow political reforms. The Empire, it was claimed, was now making real concessions to labour. It subsidized worker delegates to the London Exhibition of 1862 – doubtless in the hope that the prosperity of Victorian capitalism and the moderation of her labour leaders would exert a beneficial influence. In 1864 the right to strike was restored – though strike organization, picketing and unions were still illegal and Rouher, the neo-Orleanist minister who introduced this Bill in parliament, warned workers that supply-and-demand, not futile industrial militancy, determined wage levels. In 1868 article 1781 of the Code, under which the employer's word was accepted in trade disputes, was repealed. Public meetings were permitted. There was even talk of abolishing the livret.

Adult education was also used to win hearts and minds. It was felt that Mechanics Institutes had played a role in teaching British workers to accept the laws of political economy, whose 'sane doctrines' could check the 'insane dreams of 1848'. Economist Leroy-Beaulieu regarded religion as now an outmoded form of social control and education in economics as alone capable of weaning workers from the addiction to St Monday, and of teaching them the futility of strikes and the need to accept new machinery and working practices. Cheap editions of his writings were subsidized by Chambers of Commerce. In Paris the Association Polytechnique established evening classes in popular *quartiers*, and financed pamphlets on employer-worker collaboration. When the relaxation of public assembly laws led to an upsurge of public debate in 1868–9, economists bravely stood on public platforms in Belleville to preach the virtues of laissez-faire (Faure et al 1980).

Kulstein warns that there is a danger of being swayed by the sheer weight of propaganda directed at the working class into a belief in its efficacy. Any judgement on its impact must be nuanced. Obviously the regime did not control working-class France by force alone. Workers had the vote. Some, it is true, voted 'correctly' – like the miners in Grand' Combe in the Gard – because they were closely watched in the polling booths by company foremen (Huard 1982). But sometimes

workers voted for Bonapartist candidates whose tone was aggressively populist. In 1863 workers in the smaller textile towns of northern France voted for an official candidate who used highly colourful rhetoric against the liberal-conservative opposition candidate Thiers. Workers were now being admitted into newly created rest homes, such as that at Vincennes, as fast as workers had been admitted to the mortuaries when Thiers' troops shot them in the Rue Transnonain massacre of 1832, the Bonapartist claimed. Workers in southern and eastern France certainly supported the regime's 1859 Italian policy – in part because it clearly outraged the clergy and the royalist notables. In some constituencies the authorities chose effective neo-St Simonian candidates such as Mony, mine director of Commentry (Allier), who was respected by his workers.

But there were clear limits to the regime's capacity to win over workers. Its propaganda had obvious weaknesses. Adult education reached only a tiny minority of skilled and white-collar workers. In any case, as the Catholic F. Beslay lamented, 'all instruction from above is suspected by French workers. . . . Therefore it is ineffective'. The public prosecutor of Rouen, a firm believer in Bonapartist populism, felt that too much of the propaganda was naive and anodyne. A return to the 'primitive vitality' of earlier Bonapartist campaigns was needed. One major problem was that key Bonapartist ministers such as Rouher were dubious about populist rhetoric which might simultaneously inflame the masses and alienate the elites from the regime. The Interior Minister, thus, often acted at cross-purposes with other Ministries – for example by placing under surveillance one of the artisan authors from Prince Jerome's Palais Royal group.

These policy dilemmas went to the heart of the regime – which could not, in the last analysis, do anything to challenge fundamental capitalist interests. No prefect could deny Schneider troops if he demanded them to control a strike at Le Creusot. The Tarn prefect was sacked in 1869 for failing to give prompt support to the Carmaux mine company. Louis Napoleon might agree to receive a Marseilles stevedores' petition against port modernization – but the financiers and shipping firms were too deeply committed to the project for the government to order them to halt (Sewell 1988). By the late 1860s the regime drifted, de facto, back into the arms of the neo-Orleanist economic elites – from whom its own populist propaganda proclaimed its independence. The concessions to labour made between 1864 and 1868 triggered labour agitation which frightened the authorities into, for example, banning the Société pour l'Extinction du Paupérism set up by the social-Bonapartist Hugelman. The Interior Ministry tried to ban Education Minister Duruy from addressing the Association Polytechnique in 1868. In 1869, as a concession to the clerical right, he was sacked. Prévost-Paradol, a liberal critic of the regime, had prophesied that Bonapartism could not indefinitely go on pretending simultaneously to be Monsieur Proudhon and Monsieur Thiers. By 1869–70 the 'liberal Empire' was being driven by labour unrest to take off its velvet gloves.

2

Lyon, Marseilles and Paris

LYON, 1852–1870: THE CRISIS OF THE FABRIQUE

Briefly, after the coup, the Lyon authorities expressed hopes that the militancy of local workers had, at last, been curbed. Fifteen thousand troops garrisoned the city, suspect cabarets were shut down. The municipal councils of Croix-Rousse and La Guillotière were abolished and most of the 'demagogic' leaders were among the 800 arrested during the coup. It was hoped that workers, disillusioned after their experiences since 1848, would respond favourably to improve employment prospects offered by renewed business confidence. But from 1853 official reports became more sombre. The Emperor did receive a reasonable reception when he visited flood victims in 1856, a warmer one still on his way to 'liberate Italy' in 1859. His regime made ostentatious efforts to convince workers of its social concern by public works projects and financial support for mutual aid societies. But the police lamented that the calm of the 1850s reflected submission to armed force. On 24 February 1853, anniversary of the founding of the Second Republic, half the workforce stayed away from work. Wall posters proclaimed that ''48, betrayed by its own goodness, calls for a '93 to avenge it'. The public prosecutor noted that:

> the worker today is a communist and egalitarian, just as the bourgeois was a *philosophe* before 1789. . . . The exploitation of man by man, the tyranny of capital; all the language of the egalitarian philosophy from past centuries . . . , which appears to be forgotten because the press no longer speaks of it, is, on the contrary, preserved crudely in the thought of the working classes and form the basis of its political convictions. It will be in vain for the Imperial government to show lively sympathy, for the working class, for here it cannot destroy evil dispositions. (Lequin 1977)

In 1857 the public prosecutor was not reassured by the moderation of Hénon, the successful Republican candidate for workers had delivered 'a socialist protest vote outside of any party'. He talked of disenfranchizing the city's working class, and 23 militants were arrested – 15 of them deported to Algeria. The 'liberalization' of the regime failed to prevent an even larger Republican vote in 1863. Thereafter the situation worsened. Defensive strikes in 1863–6 gave way to an offensive strike wave in 1868–70. The First International, dominated by revolutionaries not

Proudhonist mutualists, took root in the city and infiltrated the underground trade-union movement. Working-class electors opted for radical Republican candidates. And in 1870–1 there were to be three attempts – albeit short-lived and abortive – at insurrection in the city.

Before 1851 the Lyon worker movement was built on an alliance of silk masters and journeymen who aspired to a 'social Republic' which would sponsor producer cooperatives which could rescue artisanal weaving from the threat of merchant domination. By 1869–71 economic change had altered both the structures of the workforce and the sociological basis and political strategies of popular radicalism (Sheridan 1981). By 1861 the public prosecutor remarked that Lyon was becoming 'no more than a vast commercial entrepôt, a design school and a workshop for luxury fabrics'. In 1847 53 per cent of the region's looms were in the city, by 1865 under 30 per cent. Weaving was done, increasingly, by rural out-workers, whilst much of the *moulinage* and spinning was performed in 30 large factories in the Rhône, Ain and Isère. Craft-weavers suffered a series of body blows. During the 1850s the pébrine disease destroyed the region's raw silk crops. Initially this hit Lyon's international competitiveness by raising raw material prices. Asiatic silks, imported as a replacement, proved more amenable to use on power-looms. Changes in fashion reduced the demand for quality silks, in which the city's artisan weavers specialized – so that the balance of the *fabrique* shifted 'down market' to cheaper, 'mixed' silk-cotton fabrics which could be woven by less skilled rural out-workers. The American Civil War delivered a blow to export markets – reducing 'fancy' silk exports by 90 per cent 1860–5. Many 'fancy' weavers were reduced to 'plain' weaving – in which they faced rural and factory competition.

Master *canuts* made a desperate search for survival strategies. Some took on 'plain' work during slumps in the 'fancy' trade. Many laid off journeymen and apprentices and resorted to cheaper labour – their own wives and daughters, migrant peasant girls who often worked a 16-hour day. Masters had to accept reduced *tarifs* – and journeymen received 2 francs per day, half the rate paid in the city's other artisanal trades.

These changes had consequences both for social relations within the *fabrique* and for popular politics. The masters, who had played the vanguard role in earlier labour militancy, remained hostile to the merchants whom they blamed for shifting work to the countryside. Masters resented their growing dependence on individual merchants from whom they had been forced to borrow money to equip themselves with larger Jacquard looms. Of cases which went to the Conseil des Prud'hommes in the mid 1860s 53 per cent involved disputes between masters and merchants. Masters accused merchants of fraudulent measurement of cloth, or of refusing to reimburse them for the expense of setting up looms if fashion changed and orders were suddenly cancelled.

The implications of these changes were complex. Masters' rhetoric was dominated by a Proudhonist emphasis on small-producer autonomy. Yet they petitioned the state to regulate *tarifs* and quality in a quasi-corporatist manner. Indeed the Bonapartist authorities did flirt with interventionism (Sheridan 1979). Prefect Vaisse stepped up public works projects to provide employment for silk journeymen during slumps in the *fabrique*. In 1862–3 40,000 workers were employed on

schemes to build boulevards and public parks. As in Paris, such projects provided employment, 'beautified' the city – yet worsened housing problems and, as General Castellane remarked, made troop manoeuvring on wide boulevards easy in case of future workers' revolt. Bakers were subsidized in years of grain shortages. Government orders for silk flags in 1859–61 provided jobs for weavers.

The regime also gave financial subsidies to cooperatives and mutual aid societies – provided these had conservative notables as presidents. By 1859 the Rhône had 181 mutual aid societies with 19,000 members: 'The only effective way of protecting our working class from evil propaganda is to free it to enter mutual aid societies and to teach it order and economy', the public prosecutor insisted. He acknowledged that this was a calculated risk. Despite the ban on mutual aid societies offering unemployment benefit, he was convinced that, in practice, some were involved in fomenting strikes – though this appears rarely to have been so in the 1850s.

The prefect attempted to act as a conciliator in industrial disputes, even on occasions criticizing the employers for provoking unrest by cutting *tarifs*. But the public prosecutor was aware of the potential dangers in this strategy. 'The situation of the government vis-à-vis these incidents will not be that of previous governments. . . . The working class counts, with reason, on it sympathies. But if violence appears, if repression is necessary, all is changed.' There was, he felt, a danger that workers would feel angry at betrayal by their 'friend'.

As Sheridan observes it is difficult to generalize about the extent to which silk-masters turned their grievances against the merchants into militant action. The situation of individual masters varied widely. Most owned two or four looms, but some had more. Some worked regularly for one merchant, some for several. Some did only 'fancy' weaving, others were pushed into accepting 'plain' orders. Most merchants 'controlled' under 100 looms, but a few giants ran over 1,500. Most militancy seems to have come from masters working for the bigger 'plain' merchants, who often cut *tarifs* by switching work to the countryside. But, overall, masters were increasingly defensive and cautious – appearing to fear that any militancy would simply accelerate the decline of the city's artisanal sector. Reybaud noted that small plain masters, often earning barely 3 francs per day, 'had the greatest cause to complain, yet almost always are the most resigned'.

The other major change was the sharp deterioration in their relations with journeymen (Sheridan 1981; Truquin 1977). It was journeymen who were laid off in efforts to cut costs. By 1865 two-thirds of the remaining 33,000 looms were operated by masters themselves – many of the remainder by their wives or young female assistants. Journeymen now floated in and out of the labour market as permanent jobs disappeared. They rarely lodged with masters, their food expenses were now entered on the workshop not the household budget accounts. These changes led to much soul-searching, to laments that journeymen ceased to regard the masters as their mentors the Republican newspaper *Le Progrès* claimed that some journeymen now regarded the master 'as an exploiter'. In 1869 during a journeymen's wage strike some masters made common cause with the merchants. Some journeymen understood their master's predicament. For example, N. Truquin gives a sympathetic account of the master who laid him off in the early 1860s

slump: 'Tormented by his creditors, the poor man told me he could no longer feed me and that he would sell my loom. He gave me a certificate to help me find a job elsewhere – whilst telling me that I could return to his home when work picked up' (Truquin 1977). But growing tensions were marked by the fact that, in some years, 33 per cent of disputes taken to the Prud'hommes involved master-journeymen conflicts. A further 25 per cent involved accusations of masters exploiting apprentices. The number of apprentices in the Croix-Rousse fell from 800 per year in 1857 to 146 in 1866.

Increasingly, the surviving journeymen were being pushed into a new identity as workers rather than as craftsmen in an artisanal community. Many were forced to take navvying jobs on public works projects – work resented as demeaning, often dangerous. Here they made contact with building workers and the unemployed from other trades. Employed on construction of wide boulevards, department stores, bourgeois apartments, which made central Lyon a flourishing commercial and residential area, they themselves were victims of rising rents. Complaints of their growing 'insubordination' were voiced by masters, bourgeois observers and by the authorities.

This 'insubordination' was one symptom of the wider 'moral' disintegration of the *fabrique*. Despite Rancière's scepticism about 'craft pride' *canut* culture had been dominated by the emphasis on the intelligence, dexterity and ability to carry out design patterns required by hand-weaving. *Canuts* 'treated their trade like a religion'. In 1848 their spokesman Vernay had emphasized that the reputation of the *fabrique* rested on their skill in producing 'beautiful cloth'. The decline of 'fancy' weaving thus was a blow to their self-image. Between 1847 and 1866 the proportion of Croix-Rousse weavers engaged in 'fancy' production fell from two-thirds to one-third.

Truquin's autobiography offers insights both into the crisis of the *fabrique* and into the strength of the craft ethos. Before arriving in Lyon Truquin had, over a period of a dozen years, engaged in an astonishing variety of occupations. He had been a wool-comber, a colporteur and a rag-and-bone man around his native Amiens. Deported for involvement in the Parisian street-fighting of 1848 he worked as an Army Officer's servant and in a brothel in Algeria before returning to France to work as a navvy in Lyon. This career trajectory is an interesting confirmation of Rancière's point that it is often misleading to identify a mid-nineteenth-century worker with a specific trade. In the early 1860s he was able to pick up sufficient knowhow to become a precarious plain silk-master – imbibing some sense of craft identity. After involvement in the Lyon Commune he fled to a cooperative scheme in Paraguay, complaining that France was in the process of degrading the skills of its craft-workers in order to produce a race of degraded, docile human robots.

By the 1860s *canut* workshops had ceased to rely on 'friendly sympathies' built up by the household solidarities which had been the bedrock on which the workers' movement of the 1840s had been founded. Masters were accused of failing to train apprentices, of dismissing loyal journeymen, of the economic and sexual exploitation of young female assistants (*dévideuses*) whom they employed to prepare the looms. They made ends meet via petty frauds, pilfering silk thread . . . or

'loading' it during the dyeing process to produce less durable products. 'Thus it is,' commented Reybaud, 'that the *fabrique* no longer offers anything except confused hierarchy where rights are misunderstood, and roles inverted (Sheridan 1981).

Two distinct strategies emerged from amongst the weavers seeking a solution to their problems. The first – 'associationism' – involved an attempt to develop a network of mutual aid and cooperative societies. The second – 'resistance' – involved wider class solidarities both within the city, with 'new' sectors of the working class, and outside it – with rural and factory silk-workers. Marxist historiography argued that the former approach was that of the master-weaver elite, who espoused moderate Republicanism or neo-Proudhonism, whilst the latter was supposedly adopted by journeymen, who now identified their potential allies amongst engineering-, building- and chemical-workers. They were more aggressively 'proletarian', politically activist, 'revolutionary' (Maritch 1930; Moissonnier 1972). Despite the nuances suggested by Sheridan, this model still appears plausible.

It is tempting to view the moderate 'associationism' of the 1860s as marking a retreat from the 1840s, when cooperation had been perceived as a way of rescuing the working class from the wage system. Now the cooperative groups were located almost exclusively in the Croix-Rousse, over 75 per cent of the heads of such societies were fancy masters. L. Reybaud viewed them as a petty-bourgeois elite amongst whom 'town-clothes have replace the blouse and the workshop cap'. Truquin, a parvenu plain weaver and a 'resistance' activist, was critical of them with their canes, monocles, top hats – even if these were pawned in slum years. 'The workshop-masters of the Croix-Rousse – which is, quite erroneously, believed to be the centre of revolution, are even more conservative than the merchants, for the simple reason that there would be no luxury without an aristocracy, and in consequence no silk to weave (Truquin 1977).

The goal of their consumer cooperatives was to reduce food costs in order to cut the expenditure of their household budgets. The 26 grocer cooperatives were headed by small masters. They were practical – but limited in their horizons. Clinging to their autonomy they refused to go in for joint bulk order purchases and dividends were distributed to shareholders in proportion to their holdings. Bonapartists and Republicans competed for their favours, for both viewed them as safe ways of encouraging workers to solve the 'social question' since, as the police chief argued, concern with 'material progress' made them 'less inclined to listen to political theorists'. Of 25,000 mutual aid society members in 1865, 91 per cent belonged to government-approved asociations. Republicans saw mutualism as one way in which small enterprises could flourish in a market economy. Jules Simon made a pilgrimage to Rochdale. Republican notables such as Flotard, Bonnardel and banker Germain helped sponsor cooperatives. They stressed their moralizing role, for the lazy and the alcoholic had no place in such ventures, 'liberty is not made for them . . . they are not ready for it. The city of the future belongs only to the just' (Flotard). Associationism would, it was hoped, restore the authority of fancy-masters, who could revive declining standards. 'Our aim is to preserve ourselves from poverty, by pooling our savings. To achieve this end we must correct ourselves of all vices – be industrious, good masters, good fathers,

keep peace within our households. Remember that we must offer to those entrusted to our care the example of morality.'

Producer cooperatives, too, enjoyed a revival. There were 16 in the city by 1867. Journeymen were wage-labourers, not full members. Shareholders received dividends. They involved 'an elite of the working population', perhaps 2,500 in all. The goal, Flotard claimed, was to make all workers bourgeois. In the 1866 slump the government provided 300,000 francs to support a weavers' cooperative – whose 'Proudhonist' leader, J.-P. Gauthier, was later exposed as a police informer. A few activists, old 'forty-eighters', quit in disgust at the links to the regime.

Sheridan claims that it is harsh to dismiss these ventures as 'petty-bourgeois' and reformist, designed to perserve the masters' status. He argues that acceptance of Bonapartist funds did not signify support for the regime, that cooperatives genuinely hoped to weaken merchant dominance and that those involved were committed to passing on skills. Certainly many involved were Republicans or neo-Proudhonists. Yet it is difficult to escape the conclusion that their opposition had become tame: N. Truquin recalls his involvement in negotiations to increase the weavers' *tarif*. Only three of 11 master-weavers on the committee backed him up. The rest 'preferred to achieve economies via the stomachs of their apprentices and even of their wives and children rather than to displease *Messieurs les fabricants* – in short they propped up the latters' interests'. One official commented that associationist masters retained 'democratic ideas' – but expressed 'with moderation, rather not to deny the past than to destroy the present order of things'. Sheridan regards them as feeling a deep ambivalence between associationist and resistance strategies as paths to the restoration of fancy-weaving – and says that this was, perhaps, the only 'correct' ideological stance in a period of transition.

The memoirs of J. Benoît offer insights into the evolution of the mentality of *canut* masters. Until 1851 Benoît was a 'Blanquist' and was a Dem-Soc deputy in the Second Republic. Jailed after 1851 he then returned to a city in which he felt increasingly ill at ease. Still viewing himself as a radical he felt little empathy with the style of younger militants. He harks back nostalgically to earlier decades when patriarchal master-weavers kept order in their household workshops, were respected by family and journeymen. He saw the 1864 strike law as a cunning Bonapartist ploy to incite journeymen against masters and rejected the pro-strike strategy of the Lyon branch of the International. He found the tone of new Libre-Pensée groups vulgar – though he himself was an atheist. He depicts opposition mass meetings of the late 1860s as 'attended by a public that was not very intelligent, but which was active, restless, and which had few doubts. Like all sectarians it became increasingly intolerant.' He talked dismissively of 'agitators' launching a war of the poor versus the rich – and viewed the Lyon Commune as the work of Italians paid by Bonapartist gold. He no longer recognized the Lyon population: 'I find it considerably changed. . . . Its feelings of probity, of generosity . . . had disappeared . . . to give way to evil passions' (Benoit 1968).

Indeed the working population of Lyon had changed as industrial development altered the structural balance of the economy. As the silk industry declined so a new proletariat of chemical, metallurgical and engineering workers emerged in the

suburbs of Oullins, St Fons, La Guillottière (Lequin 1977). Urban renewal projects gave employment to thousands of construction-workers. La Guillottière's population grew from 43,000 to 101,000 between 1851 and 1866. The industrial suburbs suffered from the usual problems of inadequate housing, poor sewage and water supply. Some were constructed on marshland which led to outbreaks of malaria. Their reputation was unsavoury. Social observers described them as populated by 'the dregs of the big cities'.

It was from this 'new' working class, however, that the more militant strategies of labour protest began to emerge – industrial strikes, calls for a broad working-class front covering all the city's occupational groups. By 1869 it was significant that of the city's 19 leading First International activists, only one was from the Croix-Rousse. Older accounts of the Lyon 'social movement' emphasize that it now centred around an emerging coalition of 'proletarian' workers, particularly in the metal trades, and of the remaining journeymen silk-weavers (Sheridan 1981). Sheridan argues, however, that it also involved some 'plain' silk-masters from La Guillottière and Brotteaux. These were less elitist than the Croix-Rousse 'fancy' masters. They were influenced by their neighbourhood contacts with workers in other industries, and they were suspicious of government subsidies, which the described as a trap, 'to enmesh them, in order the better to enslave them'. They were more willing to accept that political methods were necessary.

A variety of strategic options were open to the reviving labour movemen. The 'fancy' silk-masters tended to be moderate Republicans and to espouse a form of neo-Proudhonist mutualism. They were critical of strikes – which they feared might be used by journeymen against them. They tended to be patriarchal and strongly 'anti-feminist'. Until 1868 mutualists tended to hold sway in the still tiny Lyon branch of the First International, but their influence then waned as those favouring industrial militancy and political organization came to the fore (Moissonnier 1965). However, there was no unity among these latter. Some, influenced by Bakunin, urged that insurrection should be the priority. Some argued for an independent workers party which would both fight elections and seek to encourage an underground trade-union movement.

Others urged that the defeat of Bonapartism was the first priority and that this, inevitably, would involve some collaboration with Republicans. Inevitably the history of the Lyon branch of the International was one of endless ideological – and personal – infighting. The branch emerged from contact with foreign workers at international Exhibitions, but more specifically from an awareness that issues of importance to local workers – the impact of the American war on exports, free trade, employers' use of immigrant blacklegs – could only be dealt with in an international context.

Initially the International was dominated by the neo-Proudhonist J.-P. Gauthier – later to be exposed as a police spy. By 1868–9 neo-Blanquists such as La Guillottière boiler-maker Schettel, were the dominant group. They denied that mutualism and cooperation were any longer viable strategies. They claimed that, in the face of entrenched government and employer power, cooperatives would be impotent: 'You wish us to believe that the *fabricants* are going to give way before workers' associations.' Schettel was influenced by contacts with Parisian militants

such as Varlin, who urged the need for a strategy of simultaneous worker activity on political and industrial fronts combined with a tactical anti-Bonapartist alliance with the Republican bourgeoisie. The chief obstacle to this policy was the enigmatic figure of Albert Richard, an autodidactic poet – son of a neo-Proudhonist master-weaver. Richard was ambitious, saw himself as an intellectual – and was a powerful orator. He espoused a policy of insurrectionism which rejected mutualism, electoral politics and deals with the Republicans. He made much of his contacts with Bakunin. 'His huge Mongol brain is capable of rousing eastern Europe at the same time as, at my voice, Western Europe rises to march to battle.' Schettel loathed Richard as a pretentious déraciné and deplored his needless alienation of potential allies.

By 1869–70 the International, despite this internal feuding, was playing a key role in coordinating the strike wave which swept the Lyonnais. After the legalization of strikes in 1864 there had been a flurry of industrial disputes involving skilled male workers who faced the threat of technological and organizational change in their industries. Between 1864 and 1866 there were strikes by silk *tullistes*, dye-workers and Croix-Rousse weavers. Most of these were defeated as employers moved work to the countryside, imported Italian scab labour or accelerated the pace of mechanization. In *Le Progrès* Vermorel commented that the writing appeared to be on the wall for such craftsmen as 'artists are everywhere replaced by workers'. The defeat of these protests prompted some skilled workers to dismiss strikes as futile and to take refuge in mutualism – whilst others came to argue the need for political organization to back up industrial protest.

The scope and nature of the strikes of 1868–70 was more alarming for Bonapartist bureaucrats. They were aided by the upturn in the economy which weakened the hand of the employers. Amongst those involved were silk-workers – including female *ovalistes* – textile-printers, building-workers, bakers, gas and engineering-workers. First International members were active in an illicit metal-workers union in La Guillottière and an attempt to form a union covering the full range of silk-industry trades attracted 12,000 workers in autumn 1869 – whilst alarming some silk-masters. First International activists sought to use the strike weapon to weaken the influence of the mutualists. Their promise of strike funds for workers who took industrial action spread the 'myth' of the power of the International – a myth accepted for a short time both by many workers and by worried bureaucrats. They called for a federation of elected delegates of all the region's workers, pointed to the shooting of Loire miners at La Ricamarie as a sign that a desperate, crumbling regime was being forced to resort to brute force, and sent funds to strikers at Le Creusot. In the last days of the regime the public prosecutor was clearly concerned by these developments: 'I am well informed', he wrote in July 1870, 'that the most active and intelligent members of the International . . . are at this moment travelling throughout the Lyon *banlieue* . . . to recruit new sections. . . . A year ago this evil was only in its embryo.'

The most remarkable episode in this industrial unrest was the strike by female *ovalistes* (Auzias and Houel 1982). It was clearly unusual because so much of the previous history of the city's labour militancy had involved male weavers whose discourse, ideology and demands had consistently ignored the specific interests

and problems of female silk-workers. Truquin's autobiography is fascinatingly ambivalent on the subject of working-class women. He paints an horrendous portrait of the exploitation of young female auxiliary workers in silk household-workshops where they were overworked, underfed, died young. He is scathing about the role of the 'patriarchal' masters. Yet he also views working-class women of Lyon as credulous, religious, ideologically backward, subservient to the clergy who dole out charity, willing to spy on their radical menfolk for the clergy and police (Truquin 1977).

In 1848 the *canuts* had singled out the convent workshops – where young peasant girls, supervised by nuns, were employed in spinning and silk preparation – as a target for their wrath. Several had been subjected to arson attack. These continued to be a contentious issue in the Second Empire – and beyond. *Canuts* accused capitalists and clergy of forming an unholy alliance to exploit defenceless young women. . . . Yet, as Lequin observes, they too often overlooked the beam in their own eye. By 1866, 56 per cent of the silk-workers in Lyon were female – and many of these worked as *dévideuses* rolling the threads onto bobbins in artisan workshops. By the late 1850s, 11 per cent of the cases taken before the Prud'hommes involved conflicts between them and their masters. Despite the concern of *canut* rhetoric to emphasize that they were treated as 'daughters' of the household, flagrant instances of economic and sexual exploitation were not infrequent (Sheridan 1981). Truquin, a critic of the mutualist fancy masters, saw these girls as 'victims of premeditated murder'. They came on four-year contracts to 'learn' a trade which could be picked up in a few months. Often they worked a 17-hour day, were confined to the workshop. Many contracted TB – and left only to 'take the path to the cemetery'. Many were forced to act as unpaid domestic servants. As Lequin remarks, historians should be wary of nostalgia for the mythical workshop (Lequin 1986).

The 1869 strike was to occur, however, amongst 2,000 *ovalistes* – girls who did the *moulinage* of the silk thread to prepare it for weaving. The job required dexterity – but was viewed as 'unskilled'. Most of this work was done in workshops, although there were some larger factories in Brotteaux. The job was unhealthy – many contracted lung diseases – and ill paid. The term *soupe d'ovaliste* was used in the city to denote a poverty-stricken diet. The young women, 70 per cent of whom were single, tended to work from their mid teens to their mid twenties. Most were peasants' daughters – though 10 per cent were Italians. They were kept under tight surveillance at work and in their dormitories by nuns. The strike has been seen as a turning-point at which Lyon labour history failed to turn. It got support from the First International, it appeared to portend the entry of women workers into the broader worker movement. Yet, ultimately, it should be viewed as yet another 'failed rendez-vous'.

Such women workers were subject to much stereotyping in the moral discourse of the contemporary elites. Reybaud described them as 'gentle, polite and obedient', adding that 'the control of these female workers is as easy as that of their male counterparts is difficult'. Jules Simon tied himself in knots seeking to rationalize his attitudes to such female factory labour (Simon 1860). As a liberal he accepted that women's paid industrial employment was an inevitable consequence of the

free market. Yet he saw it as cruel, physically unhealthy and morally corrupting, since it led so easily to sexual promiscuity and to a weakening of family values. Simon was a Republican anti-clerical. Yet he came to view the convent workshops as a lesser evil. If nuns exerted moral control, then a girl's virginity could be safeguarded and her wages could be kept to accumulate a dowry which would allow her to marry a peasant-farmer back in her home village: 'In a word, to shut young Lyon female workers up for 3 years, subjecting them to 13 hours work per day, is to render them a service.' To allow them free access to the culture of the big city would be to corrupt them irretrievably with vice and hedonism: 'Once they have got used to depending only upon themselves during the hours that the workshop does not need them . . . they will not willingly . . . resume the yoke of domestic habits, that yoke which is so easily to bear when one has not had a period of fatal liberty.'

Predictably, therefore, the women received a barrage of abuse as the six-week strike dragged on. The Republican *Le Progrès* was initially tolerant towards them, then ironic, then nasty – claiming that troops from the garrison were going absent without leave to sleep with the strikers and that the strike's only result would be an increase in illegitimacy rates. The strikers were accused of 'behaving like men' and denounced for spending their days idling and flirting in the parks.

Their demands included calls for a wage rise of 40 per cent – to 2 francs per day – and a cut in the workday to 13 hours. But, more significantly, they questioned the dormitory system, and demanded the right to independent lodgings and freedom from ubiquitous surveillance. The strike was well organized. It began once the prefect had ignored a petition. They established a committee and a strike fund. In some ways they did receive good support from the male-dominated labour movement. Dye-workers and engineering-workers donated strike funds. A radical shoe-maker helped them write their strike demands. Thirty-one male workers were arrested in a riot, to prevent the arrival of Italian blacklegs at Perrache station. Leading figures of the First International expressed solidarity. Aubry, in Rouen, collected financial aid for them in Normandy. Varlin praised them as 'the first group of women workers who dared defend their wage-levels'.

Yet the limitations of the First Internationalists' vision is, perhaps, summed up by Marx's own comment – that social progress 'is measured by the progress of the fair sex – even the ugly ones'. Male militants were worried that at a time of great political possibilities, when the Bonapartist regime appeared at last to be in terminal crisis, the insinuations of sexual permissiveness which the strike attracted might damage the image of the labour movement. For some of the Internationalist leaders the strike had been useful, above all, as a weapon with which to wound their neo-Proudhonist opponents. Now these men decided that it was time to end the strike and to turn to more 'serious' matters. They urged the women to accept a compromise offer on wages – and deliberately ignored the specifically 'female' issue, that is to say the whole issue of surveillance and lodgings (Auzias and Houel 1982).

The crucial political factor in Lyon was the relationship between labour and the Republicans – despite Richard's attempts to act as if the latter were irrelevant. Most worker activists saw some sort of tactical deal with bourgeois radicals as a

prerequisite for any defeat of the Bonapartists. This alliance was unlikely to be an easy one. In 1863 many workers had regarded the successful Republican candidate, Hénon, as too 'pale'. In 1864 local elections workers had helped elect Commissaire against a moderate Republican who had the backing of the liberal professions, shopkeepers and the elite of Croix-Rousse masters. Thereafter, it was evident that if Republicanism was to secure workers' support it would have to be represented by 'radicals' such as Dr Raspail rather than by moderate businessmen such as Arlès-Dufour. Radicals remained pretty vague on social issues. Their trump card was anti-clericalism. Raspail was a notorious freethinker. Denis Gros's virulently anti-religious newspaper *L'Excommunié* had a wide popular readership until its editor was jailed. Lyon workers hated the convent workshops, were keenly interested in secular education and by 1868–9 were enthusiastically participating in civil funerals. In 1856 L. Reybaud had asked a Lyon artisan which of the many socialist sects he and his friends supported, only to be told, 'No, Monsieur, we are positivists.' Workers had supported Louis Napoleon's Italian campaign and championed Garibaldi against the Pope.

In 1869 Raspail won a sweeping victory in La Guillottière. Workers clearly ignored Richard's advice to abstain in this election, just as Lyon's heavy 'no' vote in the 1870 plebiscite suggests that they ignored his advice again. Schettel regarded Richard as an adventurer – 'a man who has sold out to the bourgeoisie' – and wanted him expelled from the International. The dominant line of militants was that of Varlin in Paris. Workers should seek to develop their autonomous political and industrial movement whilst joining a tactical alliance with the Republicans. This did not preclude active support for industrial militancy, which was taken by the prefect as a sign that 'the class war is assuming an air of permanence'. By the spring of 1870 the regime felt driven to mass arrests and show trials. Since the victims of these included both International leaders and Republicans, this persecution seemed to act to push these, willy-nilly, together into a 'democratic front'.

Sadly, the fall of the Empire was not only to split this alliance but to trigger a rash and abortive coup attempt to Bakuninists in September 1870 from which the Lyon labour movement did not really recover. Local administration was taken over by Andrieux, just out of jail, who sought to achieve a smooth transition from Empire to centre-left Republic. However, Richard's allies, hoping to capitalize on economic unrest caused by growing unemployment which had resulted from the war, attempted to seize the town hall. Marx saw this as a futile action which undid most of the achievements of years of labour organization in the city. In the winter of 1870–1 the 'Gambettist' municipality sought to pursue a policy which accentuated Lyon's municipal liberties – stifled since 1851 by Bonapartist bureaucratic rule – secularization of education and reform of municipal taxation. Although it lacked any clear strategy or any real organized working-class party the International made two more abortive risings – in March and April 1871 – in support of Paris (Gaillard 1971). Despite this, Lyon's radical municipality felt rather closer to the Paris Commune – or at least to its professed policy of municipal liberties and federalist decentralization, than it did to Thiers. It made efforts – rebuffed by Thiers – to intercede to negotiate a truce between Paris and Versailles.

J. Archer's (1972) analysis of the social composition of the 1871 Lyon insurgents

offers some insight into the shifting balance within the working class. Of 339 who died, were wounded or arrested only 10 per cent were silk-weavers. In 1834 well over 33 per cent of the insurgents had been from the *fabrique*. Although a wide variety of the city's trades were involved, metal-workers (15 per cent) and building-workers (11 per cent) were the most prominent. Despite the usual conservative claims about the 'dangerous classes' only one in five had a police record for crime. Nearly two-thirds were migrants to the Rhône. Seventy per cent were over 30 years of age. This analysis is comparable to that made by Rougerie for the Paris Commune. It suggests a working class 'in transition'. The centre of gravity of militancy was no longer so clearly with the artisan trades. Many of the metalworkers were employed in factories in La Guillottière or Oullins. The Croix-Rousse was no longer the red *quartier*.

MARSEILLES, 1852–1871: MIGRATION, SOCIAL MOBILITY AND POPULAR POLITICS

Whereas in the early years of the Empire there had been massive electoral abstention – above 60 per cent – in Marseilles, by 1869 the popular vote in the city had swung behind the radical-Republican Esquiros. The First International had a branch in the city, and its militants were spreading propaganda into the former leftist bastions of Provence – winning recruits, for example, among the cork-workers of Garde-Freinet (Var). In the spring of 1871 the popular movement in the city responded to the appeal of the Paris Communards for a decentralized radical Republic by staging their own brief Commune (Olivesi 1950).

How one can explain the radicalization of the political culture of a port which was still, in the 1840s, viewed as a bastion of Catholic royalism and of traditionalist Provençal culture? The rapid growth of the population from 190,000 in 1846 to 312,000 by 1871 was accompanied by significant changes in the industrial economy and social geography of the city. Yet one should be wary of assuming that these changes led in any simple way either to a 'swamping' of the city by deracinated, alienated migrants or to unilinear decline in the position of artisan trades. Whilst there is some evidence of these processes, Sewell suggests that many migrants to the city were themselves literate, skilled and potentially upwardly mobile and that, although the 'declining artisan' thesis may be applicable to tailors and shoe-makers, the expansion of the port stimulated increased economic opportunity for skilled workers in the building, food and service sectors (Sewell 1985). Hence although the 'artisanate' fell as a proportion of the total workforce, it was still expanding in absolute terms. Sewell has warned against acceptance of a facile reductionism which seeks to explain radical mobilization in terms of any supposed uniform threat to the skilled trades, and in favour of restoring contingency and agency to labour history (Sewell 1988).

Sewell's work is an ambitious attempt to utilize census and marriage register data to compile a quantitative sociology which can chart patterns of migration and social mobility in a growing city. Census registers record the name, address, sex, age, marital status and occupation of the inhabitants. Marriage records provide

data on the occupation and birthplace of the spouses, on fathers' occupations and residence – or on place of death – and, on the age and occupation of four witnesses at the marriage. Sewell used the social position of these witnesses to compile an 'occupational status scale' to rank some 60 trades. The ability to attract high status marriage witnesses was taken, along with high literacy and having a non-working wife, as a sign of a prestigious occupation.

This is an imaginative way to tease information from statistical sources and to bring to light empirical data assumed to be untraceable. The problem with the marriage registers, as Sewell concedes, is that by their very nature they tend to exclude the more transient 'floating' population – thereby presenting a profile of migrant integration into the city which is rather too 'optimistic'.

The volume of trade passing through the port expanded rapidly in the 1850s and 1860s. The city was linked to Lyon and Paris and Languedoc by the railway system. The docks were modernized with Parisian capital. Control of the port's shipping passed into the hands of national and international companies. The social geography of the city altered markedly. The 'old city', next to the established port, remained an area where the more 'traditionalist', Provençal-speaking elements of the popular classes – stevedores, fishmarket porters – lived, alongside single, male immigrants who were often Italian. There were pockets of prostitution and criminality here. The bourgeoisie's commercial and residential area was to the south of the Canabière street. The petty-bourgeoisie tended to live on the hill of the Plaine-St-Michel. The main growth areas were the heavily working-class suburbs, whose population grew six-fold between the 1820s and the 1860s. Some, to the south of the city, contained skilled groups of artisans, sail-makers, stevedores. Others, to the north and south east, were dominated by factory-workers. Thirty-one per cent of the population of these suburbs were unskilled. In the 1820s one in eight of the city's bridegrooms lived there, by the 1860s one in three. Ninety-five per cent of the city's population growth came from immigration, for although birth rates were 25 per cent above the national average, the death rate was 40 per cent higher than for France as a whole. The artisanate fell from 40 to 35 per cent of the active population between 1851 and 1865 – but rose in absolute numbers from 18,300 to 28,800 as the city's expansion boosted demand for construction, food, services, clothing and luxuries. In most trades, division of labour remained rudimentary. Those involved in clerical, sales and service sectors expanded from 9.8 to 20.7 per cent of the active population. And the number of factory-workers almost doubled between 1848 and 1870 to reach 12,000. Some of the latter were skilled, but the proportion of unskilled in the overall labour force rose from 9.1 to 14 per cent. The largest factories were tobacco plants, sugar refineries and machine-building works. Soap, glass, flour-milling and oil-pressing also had large-scale works. Shipbuilding expanded in Marseilles itself, and in nearby La Ciôtat. By 1870 the Bouches du Rhône ranked fifth in the league of industrial departments.

The expanding labour force was recruited from migrants. In 1821 two-thirds of the city's grooms had been natives, by 1870 only one-third. But these migrants were not Chevalier's disorientated lumpenproletarians. Before 1850 some 60 per cent were offspring of peasant-proprietors, artisans and petty-bourgeois from the agro-towns of the Midi. And, indeed, the majorty of the 20 per cent of migrants

who came from elsewhere in France came from artisanal or petty-bourgeois backgrounds and brought skills or capital with them. The 65 per cent literacy rate among migrant grooms was 10 percentage points higher than that of native-born grooms – though female migrants were less literate, came more from agricultural backgrounds and tended to gravitate towards domstic service. After 1850 the profile of migrants altered. Thirty-five per cent now came from more distant departments. The proportion from peasant or unskilled backgrounds grew, whilst that of artisans fell.

Migrants to Marseilles

	Peasants (%)	Unskilled (%) pa	Artisans (%)
1821	21	4	29
1850	33	7	26
1870	38	12	20

This change could, obviously, have created potential problems of *déracinement* and alienation. Yet the literacy rate of non-foreign migrant grooms (88 per cent) remained higher than that of native-born grooms (86 per cent) – and well above the national average (75 per cent).

Sewell's most striking discovery was that French-born migrants exhibited faster upward mobility than did natives of the city. They were, in some sense, 'self-selecting', often people of drive and initiative. They were literate, often skilled and – in the case of peasants' children – could bring some capital with them. Whilst many began in manual jobs their sons had often, by the time of marriage, risen into clerical or white-collar occupations. By 1869 5 per cent of native-born sons of unskilled workers had risen into the lower middle-class, but 22 per cent of the of the sons of French migrants. In all the proportion of migrant grooms who rose from the artisanate into the lower-middle class was 24 per cent by 1869, whilst 12 per cent of sons of unskilled migrants had achieved such social promotion – and 34 per cent of sons of peasants. Much migration was, thus, orderly, planned. It made use of networks of kinship. Marriage between 'compatriots' from the same village or *bourg* remained frequent. Hence Chevalier's gloomy vision of migration as a source of anomie, crime and family dislocation is, Sewell argues, questionable. He does concede that those arrested for crimes tended to be single, male migrants from more distant regions of France – or Italians – who lodged in *garnis* and lacked the kinship networks of more 'successful' migrants. It is at this point that Sewell's findings are most suspect. His own sources give priority to those migrants who put down roots.

Yet what of migrants who did not marry? Many, surely, lived in *concubinage*? Illegitimacy rates in Provence as a whole (14 per cent) were lower than those in Paris (27 per cent) or Lille (19 per cent). Yet in 1871 one-quarter of couples in the workers' *quartier* of Belle-de-Mai were unmarried (Gaillard 1981). The city had 31,000 Italians whose profile, surely, fits Chevalier's model quite closely. Their literacy (67 per cent) was 20 points lower than that of French migrants. They were disproportionately involved in criminal prosecutions. Most did unhealthy, low-

skill jobs in tanneries, chemical plants, soap-works, sugar refineries or general navvying. One could, presumably, argue that it was precisely this reserve army of immigrant labour which gave French migrants their opportunity to move into skilled jobs, supervisory posts or into the white-collar sector. In this, Marseilles foreshadowed a pattern which was to become widespread in France over the following century.

Predictably the French expressed little gratitude for having this service rendered to them. An undercurent of xenophobia was apparent in the city. Italians were accused of eating strange food, of being noisy, violent, over-ready to use knives. They were blamed for the growth of crime and prostitution. They were said to undercut wage levels, flood schools in popular *quartiers* with their offspring and to receive more than their fair share of social welfare. In 1870, when the Bonapartist regime fell, some Italians were deported to appease popular xenophobia. By the 1880s the emerging Marseilles socialist movement made unavailing pleas to French workers not to treat Italians as inferiors. The Great Depression of that decade and growing tariff disputes between France and Italy – by then an ally of Bismarck – fuelled chauvinism and led to race riots.

In what ways can one correlate Sewell's findings on social structure and social mobility with the trajectory of popular politics? Marseilles was, clearly, a flourishing port in which white-collar and service sectors of the labour force were expanding and in which there was no catastrophic crisis of the artisanate. A sizeable minority of the working-class and artisan population, including many migrants, were able to achieve some upward social mobility. And yet this proved a recipe not, as one might imagine, for political conservatism but, on the contrary, for the growth of popular radicalism.

Why was this so? Sewell drops only tantalizing hints. He argues that upward social mobility is not an automatic key to political stability, that its significance and consequences have to be 'discovered' rather than merely 'assumed'. Apparently, the opportunity for sections of workers to enter white-collar or petty-bourgeois occupations failed to produce a wider 'integration' of the city's population or support for the Bonapartist regime. The key to any explanation for this must be sought therefore in culture, ideology, politics. Perhaps the expansion of the city's economy, by drawing in outside capital and migrants, opened its political culture to wider national political debate?

As we saw in Part II, Sewell invokes this argument to help explain the beginnings of the transition of the city's stevedores from a localist, patois-speaking Catholic-royalist labour aristocracy towards radicalism during the political struggles of the Second Republic. However, by 1860 there were more definable material reasons for this metamorphosis (Sewell 1988). For their cosy niche in the port economy was finally undermined. Two new docks were constructed, financed by Paris-based joint-stock companies who were determined to employ dockers directly, rather than using master-stevedores as subcontractors. Mechanized cranes was introduced. New warehouses were sited in fenced-off areas of the docks away from workers' *quartiers* – making pilfering more difficult and reducing reliance on the 'honesty' of the master-stevedores. Seeing the writing on the wall, the stevedores petitioned the Emperor against the scheme. They received a typically populist

response: 'Messieurs, you have done well to . . . see me . . . I will do everything that may be in my power for your interests.' But too much capital investment was at risk for Louis Napoleon to take any meaningful action. The stevedores sought to rally sympathy amongst Marseilles merchants, who resented the intrusion of Parisian capital and big shipping companies into the port. By 1869, three of the four major shipping firms which controlled 90 per cent of the port's trade were operated from Paris.

But the master-stevedores were unable to stem the defection of their rank-and-file supporters who, willy-nilly, were forced to seek jobs in the new docks. When the stevedores' society sought to expel such men these took their case to court – and won. By 1869 the once-proud society had lost its monopoly of dock work and survived only as a mutual aid society. There is thus a case for arguing that stevedores' resentments at capitalist innovation and at their 'betrayal' by the Bonapartist regime completed the process of radicalization begun in 1848–51 when the dock-workers had been influenced by the discourse of the Dem-Soc movement.

Any analysis of the changing consciousness of the Marseilles working class must take account of the impact of migrants who, almost by definition, were the group most open to change. They brought with them new perspectives and ideas from northern France. Inevitably they began to break down introverted Provençal culture. Nowhere is this more evident than in the sphere of religion. Until the 1840s Marseilles had been described as a city of 'fanaticism' and 'superstition'. Periodic visitations of cholera led to full churches and ostentatious devotion to St Roche. Most of the city's mutual aid societies had patron saints. Barely 4 per cent of babies were unbaptised.

By the 1860s these patterns of behaviour were in full transition. Only seven of 118 mutual aid societies had saints' names. Mass attendance had fallen from 47 to 31 per cent between 1841 and 1862 – and to below 25 per cent in workers' *quartiers*, even though over half of women still practised in areas of the city with many native-born inhabitants. In the 1820s 80 per cent of babies were baptised within three days of birth, by 1860 40 per cent. Outbursts of popular and anticlericalism were increasingly frequent. In 1868 Catholics returning from fighting for the Papal zouaves were jeered in the streets. In 1870 the Mission de France was pillaged. By the late 1870s the city was home to the prince of anti-clerical journalists, Leo Taxel, who regaled his readers with stories of Papal sexual and financial scandals, pregnant nuns, fake miracles and clerical intolerance (Charpin 1964).

In the 1840s worker-poet Charles Poncy had lamented that Provençal workers 'care little for serious reading, intended to improve their lot'. Certainly, much of the literature directed at working-class readers in the Second Empire offered no more than a diet of sensational crimes, scandals and *faits divers*. Nevertheless, the city did have a branch of the *Ligue de l'Enseignement*, to which many workers, including radical leader Bastelica, belonged. The regime had shut down the workers' poetry circle the *Athénée Ouvrière* after 1851 because of involvement of its members in politics. But, as one priest remarked, it was artisans from northern France or the Protestant Cévennes who appeared most interested in reading: 'These workers who have come from all parts of France have no resemblance to those of Marseilles. They possess a certain education, they have read a lot, and

still do so. Sadly it is bad books and newspapers which are the subject of their reading.' Clearly it was French which was the lingua franca of such migrants. French was, also, the language of social promotion. Even so the victory of Esquiros in 1869 was still celebrated by Provençal songs (Gaillard 1981).

Working-class protest was provoked by the problems of urban renewal and urban growth. The construction of the Rue Impériale alone rendered some 16,000 homeless. Many of the mushrooming working-class suburbs such as Belle-de-Mai, whose population grew from 3,000 to 20,000, were shanty towns with poor water supply and open sewers, whose atmosphere was further polluted by oil, soap and chemical factories. Paternalist housing associations did construct a few low-price dwellings, but their draconian rules and regulations were resented by working-class tenants.

Undoubtedly, native Marseillais came to resent the ways in which 'outside' financiers and shipping firms were changing the city. Provençal workers resented being given orders by northern managers, engineers and foremen. At Toulon, along the coast, one such manager was told by workers at the Arsenal that he was 'unfit to live amongst Provençals and should go and give orders to Bretons'. Victor Gelu voiced a heartfelt lament for the transformation of his home town which many native workers must have echoed: 'O Marseilles of my youth, where are you? You have even lost your own shape. I see colossal factories, huge warehouses, railway stations – but I search in vain for the traces of places I loved in my childhood! They claimed they were beautifying you – but they have disfigured you. As for you, you are no longer my mother – I no longer recognize you under your mask.' Such sentiments nurtured the municipalist federalism and resentment at Bonapartist centralization, shared by middle-class Republicans and local neo-Proudhonists, evident in the Marseilles Commune of 1871 (Greenberg 1971).

It would be rash to talk of the 'making' of the Marseilles working class, for the city's labour force remained an uneasy blend of natives, migrants and immigrants. The working-class culture of Provence as a whole remains a relatively under-researched field because although the Bouches-du-Rhône had become, in fact, a major industrial department, the image of the Midi remained much less morose than that of the Nord. 'Provence' conjured up sea, sunshine and Pagnolesque rusticity, not the chemical plants of the Marseilles suburbs. Local working-class consciousness emerged from an as yet unresolved synthesis of the new perspectives and attitudes of migrants and of native cultural resentment at northern control of the city's economy. Studies of individual industries reveal the heterogeneity of the labour force and the wide range of experiences. In the shipyards of La Ciôtat workers were well-paid, skilled men whose employers provided model housing schemes, technical training courses and pensions. Yet 38 workers – all migrants – at La Ciôtat were members of the First International in 1870. Skilled building-workers enjoyed full employment during the construction boom, but faced increasing problems from subcontracting systems – denounced as 'the most abject and shameful form of wage-slavery' – under which cowboy entrepreneurs brought in Italian labour to undercut wage rates. In the soap, oil and sugar factories supervisory and skilled jobs were held by Provençals – whose families often held land in the Var – whilst the dirty, dangerous jobs were done by Italians. Italian women

were also employed in these industries, in tile-making and in the sweated clothing sector. Stevedores' daughters, by contrast, had better-paid jobs in the huge tobacco works, whilst young girls and orphans were often used as cheap labour in the laundry trade by Catholic institutions.

PARIS, 1852–1870: URBAN RENEWAL AND POPULAR CULTURE

The transformation of Paris by the urban renewal projects of Haussmann was the central feature of the experiences of the capital's working class during the Bonapartist decades. Historic popular quartiers with narrow winding streets were demolished to make way for boulevards, rail stations, grandiose public buildings, theatres, barracks and bourgeois apartments. The city centre acquired sewers, piped water, urinals, street lighting and nightly police patrols. The appearance, economy and social geography of Paris were transformed. Public works construction projects became the motor of capitalist development – justifying the old maxim 'Quand le bâtiment va, tout va' ('When the building industry prospers, everything prospers'). At the height of the construction boom 20 per cent of the workforce were employed in this sector (Pinkney 1958). It recruited not merely from traditional regions such as the Limousin, but from Normandy textile out-workers hit by the collapse of rural industry. Although the boom was running out of steam as the city's financial problems accumulated in the early 1860s, it was revived by the 1867 *Exposition* which was designed to display to Europe France's new show-place capital and her new-found economic and political self-confidence. This created thousands of jobs. As Tim Clark comments, 'it was only in the form of the city itself that [capitalism] appeared as what it was, a shaping spirit, a force remaking things with ineluctable logic' (Clark 1984). The population of Paris proper rose from 1.1 million to 1.8 million in two decades.

Despite the 'modernizing' of the city, the stimulation of its economy led not to the decline of 'artisanal' production but to its apogee, its Indian summer. Statistics on employment structure are, as ever, confusing because in the *enquêtes* of 1847–8, 1860 and 1872 it is difficult to distinguish between small-masters and journeymen. Yet the quantitative evidence does not, in itself, support Duveau's claim that artisanal industry was in decline. The number of small *ateliers* in central Paris grew by 20 per cent between 1848 and 1860. In the peripheral areas 'annexed' by the city in 1860, 80 per cent of workshops were run by *petit patrons* working alone or with one worker. In 1848 the ratio of 'employers' to workers was 1:5.4, by 1872 it was 1:4.8 (Gaillard 1977).

Nor did Haussmannization evict artisanal activity from the centre. Many artisans needed to keep close to the heart of Paris to be in touch with orders for work. Small-scale industry enjoyed a second wind – concentrating on specialized, often subdivided, work for petty-bourgeois and export markets. Free trade stimulated export of *articles de Paris*. Parisian shoes sold in Latin America. In order to maintain skill levels deemed essential to preserve France's reputation in export markets a variety of professional courses were sponsored – by the regime, by Catholic organizations, by employers and by liberal Republicans. Some labour aristocrats

like Corbon came to accept that on-the-job training of young workers was inadequate and that skills could only be renewed by some formal training (Duveau 1947). Progressive employers, in turn, viewed professional courses as essential both for future export prospects and to end the class divisions of 1848 by wooing skilled workers back into 'partnership'. By the 1860s over 4,000 workers attended evening classes in metal-working, cabinet-making.

Developments in large-scale industries were not unilinear. Some, like wallpaper and leather, stagnated. Textiles were in terminal decline. Cail moved its forges to northern France. Leather employers shifted production to the Vienne, where labour costs were 60 per cent lower. Although the number of machine-construction workers rose from 6,635 to 9,975, the average size of plants fell from 63 to 27 workers. What was occurring was, thus, less a change from 'artisanal' to 'industrial' production than, as Gaillard emphasizes, a symbiosis of the two. In the metal trades of the central Arrondissements medium-sized firms pooled their resources and shared the use of steam engines (Gaillard 1977).

Yet there was some trend towards concentration in metal-finishing. Gouin's Batignolles works employed 1,200 in the construction of railway bridges and locomotives. Cail, which made boilers for refineries and distilleries, came to employ 2,800 – many recruited from provincial metallurgical centres such as Fourchambault (Gaillard 1961). The geography of large-scale industry was determined in part by access to transport – the Seine, the new railways – but also by pressures exerted by property speculators anxious that their profits from the Haussmann boom in real estate prices should not be jeopardized by the location of heavy industry close to bourgeois residential areas. Hence it began to gravitate towards the rapidly expanding *banlieues* – suburbs like La Villette with its soap and candle works, salt refineries, forges, chemical plants, glass-blowing, distilleries, match-making and timber-yards.

Haussmann's strategy held the key to the success or failure of hopes for the regime's long-term stability. Its underlying motives were diverse. Louis Napoleon had a St Simonian dream of a modern capital whose broad streets, railways and markets could become the hub of the national economy. The grandiose public works schemes and amenities of the centre would, it was hoped, attract tourists, give the regime prestige, and offer lucrative speculative profits to its bourgeois backers. Workers would be simultaneously cowed and wooed. The new Rue Turbigo obliterated from the map the Rue Transnonain, scene of barricade fighting of past insurrections. The new Prefecture of Police – whose manpower rose by 800 per cent – was located, symbolically, on the very site of the thieves' kitchen where Eugène Sue's criminals had met. Troop reinforcements brought in by rail could now march down broad boulevards to quell future risings, barracks were built at key crossroads.

In *Nouvelle Babylone* (1862) E. Pelletane has an army officer remark: 'We wished to make Paris an armed camp. There would be no more workers in cotton aprons fixing up wall posters announcing new regimes.' But, hopefully such intimidation would become superfluous as economic expansion provided full employment. Such confidence proved over-optimistic. Successive elections showed that popular Paris remained singularly unresponsive to the regime's seduction. As the building boom

slowed in the 1860s the regime's liberal press and assembly laws unleashed a wave of public protest. The 1869 elections were a disaster (Girard 1960). Briefly seduced by the war fever of July 1870 the city responded to the first news of military defeat by overthrowing the regime. Then, after the miseries of the Prussian siege of the winter of 1870–1, the population rejected the humiliating surrender to the Prussians of the rightist National Assembly and established a Commune. The concerns of working-class Communards were many and varied. They were acting from Jacobin nationalist pride, insulted by the surrender, and from municipal pride injured by the denial of self-government to the city by the Bonapartist regime. Yet workers who supported neo-Jacobin and socialist leaders did so, in addition, because they had experienced Haussmann's changes more as a prolonged nightmare than as a bright dream of progress and capitalist prosperity. Why was this so?

The Commune has, plausibly, been interpreted as an attempt by workers to reclaim possession of 'their' city – from which they had been evicted by Haussmannism. On 4 September 1870 demonstrators who overthrew the regime took particular pleasure in tearing down Haussmann's name from the street signs.

Bourgeois intellectuals, too, had mounted a sustained assault on Haussmann's projects. They had exposed his sordid links with property speculators, the 'kickbacks' and the pork-barrel politicking. They lamented that a cultural 'Athens' was being vulgarized into a mixture of Babylon and New York. Its new boulevards were 'boring', soulless, geometrically precise. 'Real' Paris had been dirty – but vital, fascinating. Its streets had thronged with a colourful *enfants du Paradis* crowd of acrobats, flower-sellers, street actors, knife-grinders – who now faced eviction to the *banlieue* as geographical class segregation became more marked. The worker's *blouse*, already a rare sight in the city's west end, would disappear from a centre devoted to high finance, and élite consumerism (Clark 1984).

There were elements of exaggeration in all this. In the 1830s Parisians were already lamenting a lost golden age when the classes lived on different storeys of the same building and mingled happily. And popular *quartiers* proved hardy and resistant to Haussmann. Small *patrons*, journeymen, small shopkeepers did not disappear entirely from the centre. There remained a world in which business and sociability intertwined, in which transactions were conducted over café drinks, where plumbers, locksmiths and tailors were known by name and reputation. As Gaillard emphasizes, many workers in the small trades felt they *had* to remain close to the web of contacts which provided them with orders and raw materials. So the diminishing number of old buildings were endlessly subdivided as artisanal workers and small traders clung onto footholds which enabled them to live near to their work. But the ground beneath them was being eaten away as the Haussmannite tide covered the surviving islands of popular habitation such as the Ile de la Cité.

Inevitably, an already chronic housing shortage was worsened (Shapiro 1985). Critics of the regime competed to coin images to convey the contrasts between affluence and squalor. 'Babylon! You are a superb city', wrote one. 'Your enemies proclaim you the queen of the world – though your sons lie exhausted at the edge of your crossroads, asking where they shall sleep at night.' *Some* official efforts

were made to cope with the crisis. Attempts were made to give greater powers to the Unsanitary Dwellings Commission, established under the law passed by the social-Catholic de Melun in 1850 which had perceived a link between poor housing, frequentation of cafés, alcoholism and revolutionary violence in the city. The Commission could inspect unhealthy dwellings and – after 1860 – fine landlords who ignored appeals to their generous sentiments and refused to supply clean water to new buildings. But it had little power to enforce repairs and visited under 5 per cent of the city's housing stock per year.

Haussmann put his faith in the free market to alleviate the housing shortage: 'It is best to leave to speculators, stimulated by competition, the task of satisfying the people's real needs.' The Emperor responded complacently to a workers' petition on housing – talking of 'rents tending to decrease with the multiplicity of construction, the working class enriching itself by labour and through better organization of charity'. But construction companies were too busy making profits from grandiose projects to bother themselves with popular housing and, unlike some of their paternalistic provincial counterparts, Parisian employers showed little interest in company housing schemes. The government-sponsored Cité Napoléon had 170 dwellings at Rochechouart, but had a 10 pm curfew and its working-class inhabitants loathed its 100 rules and regulations and the surveillance of their lives. Unsurprisingly, the scheme proposed by worker delegates to the 1867 Exposition for expropriation of bourgeois apartments received no official favour.

Between 1851 and 1856 the population grew by 250,000, the housing stock *fell* by 600. Haussmann's projects displaced 350,000 – 'a necessary upheaval [which] cannot be easily appreciated by the masses who become easily wearied . . . when the upheaval is prolonged for 17 years'. Land prices doubled, while rents rose by between 40 per cent and 100 per cent – much faster than wages. 'The term rent day', noted D. Poulot, 'is a sword of Damocles for which the working-class housewife deceives her husband' (Poulot 1980). Daumier's avaricious landlord figure, Monsieur Vautour, was portrayed exclaiming "Good! They are tearing down another home! I shall raise my tenants 200 francs!" ' Corbon lamented, 'they have made two cities, one rich, one poor. The latter surrounding the former. The poor are like an immense rope hemming in the rich'. Between 1861 and 1872 the 10 central *arrondissements* lost 30,000 inhabitants, the 10 outer *arrondissements* gained 200,000.

Novelists – and painters like van Gogh in his *Outskirts of Paris* series – began to focus on the city's outer *banlieue*. Much of it was quasi-rural, a 'bastard countryside' (Hugo) – a desolate wasteland of cheap taverns, unmade roads, factory chimneys, gasometers, rag-pickers and the occasional incongruous cow. Artisans forced from the centre to go to live there had to tramp miles each day to and from the surviving workshops in the city – a procession graphically illustrated in the early pages of Zola's *L'Assommoir*. The *banlieue* lacked basic amenities. Food prices were higher there than around the central markets. As L. Lazare commented:

> artisans and workers are shut up there in veritable Siberias . . . criss-crossed with winding, unpaved paths, without lights . . . shops, with no water laid on. . . . Everything is lacking. We have sewn rags on the purple robe of a Queen; we have built within Paris two cities, quite different and [mutually] hostile, the city of luxury surrounded

> and beseiged by the city of misery. You have put temptation and covetousness side by side.'
>
> (Clark 1984)

Belleville was the archetypal new faubourg (Jacquemet 1984). From 1850 to 1914 it took on the mythical role once played by the faubourg St Antoine as the dangerous, 'red' bastion. By 1860 it was the third most industrialized commune in the Seine with 758 artisanal businesses, seven match factories, leather-works. Its population grew by 67 per cent to 60,000 1851–6. Its statistics of deprivation were appropriately grim. Illegitimacy was above 20 per cent, 76 per cent died penniless, the poorest 85 per cent of those who died left 0.8 per cent of the total wealth bequeathed. Four-fifths of brides worked, and childbirth-related mortality among women was high. School inspectors told of low attendances and 'dreadful mental degradation'. Crime rates were high, notably among casual migrant labourers in the match factories. Already in 1848 high rents had led to landlord-tenant conflicts. Over 20 per cent of court cases involved rent disputes. By the 1860s the growing threat to the work culture of the *faubourg*'s 28 different metal trades was fostering industrial disputes. By 1867–70 Belleville was widely viewed as the major bastion of social unrest and popular radicalism. Gambetta, still perceived as a radical, was elected as Republican deputy in 1869 – but was already seen as too 'bourgeois' by local activists. There were sporadic outbursts of quasi-political rioting in 1868–9.

Predictably, Belleville became a key stronghold of the Commune. After its supression the authorities made every effort to dub the dead or arrested insurgents 'criminals', but barely 20 per cent had previous police records – and these were mostly for minor juvenile offences. By comparison with the overall Communards' profile those of Bellville were older – 14 per cent only were under 25, as opposed to 25 per cent for Paris as a whole – and were more likely to have been born in the Paris region. Although some were casual labourers most were skilled metal, wood or jewellery workers. In short, they were precisely those men from Paris's staple 'artisan' industries who had been displaced from the centre since the 1850. Even the massacre of the Communards failed to tame Belleville which, 'had the appearance of a *quartier* which had been defeated but which refused to submit'.

In place of the old central *quartiers* there had, thus, emerged – as Tim Clark observes – the world immortalized by the early Impressionists. Central Paris became an arena for spectacle, parades, amusement where the well-to-do came to stroll, sit in cafés, shop in department stores, attend theatres. It was colonized by the new capitalist leisure and consumer culture. Its 'workers' were café waiters, restaurant cooks, sales assistants, cab-drivers – many indistinguishable in their off-duty dress from their elite clients. But the wider Parisian working class had not been drawn into this new culture. Working-class housewives could not afford to shop at Bon Marché. And, as J. Rancière comments, workers who visited the 1867 Exposition, designed to exhibit the new capitalist culture, came away sceptical of the wonders on view. In short, as yet, the Parisian working class was simply employed producing commodities for the new metropolitan consumer culture whilst themselves suffering from the brutal transformation of their urban environ-

ment. And the 'artisanate', if not yet declining in absolute numbers, was suffering from an underlying crisis as its traditional work culture was further undermined by the demands of faceless Parisian, national and international markets which imposed major innovations in the methods of small-scale production (Clark 1984).

Increasingly, artisans feeling that their own trade was no longer likely to provide a tolerable future for their sons, looked to education to offer them an escape route into white-collar occupations. Much strike activity of the early 1860s involved tailors, printers, bronze-workers attempting, unsuccessfully, to preserve their differentials. Their rhetoric evoked a sensation of being 'swamped' by a reserve army of labour, often female. During the 1850s the construction boom had cut the proportion of women in the labour force – but this trend was reversed in the 1860s (Gaillard 1977).

	Female workers (thousands)	Male workers (thousands)	Females as % of males
1848	112	160	70
1860	106	234	45
1873	191	272	70

The typical response of printing employers in 1862 when faced with a petition for a wage *tarif* was to import female workers. The ready-made clothing sector was increasingly dominated by women outworkers using sewing-machines – for which they had been trained by nuns whilst at primary school. The discourse of many of the Parisian leaders of the First International such as Tolain was stridently 'Proudhonist' in its anti-female tone.

Young workers were the second reservoir of cheap labour. Male artisans spoke of a terminal 'crisis of apprenticeship'. Y. Lequin has warned that this rhetoric should not be accepted at face value, for on-the-job training of young workers by experienced adults who passed on their know-how was to survive in many factories into the late nineteenth century – for work continued to be done in small, quasi-autonomous work-teams which were recruited amongst the team leader's kin and friends (Lequin 1986). Hence there remained an element of continuity in French work culture which may serve to explain the persistence of job-control preoccupations amongst 'syndicalist' strikers in the 1900s. One has merely to rid oneself of the nostalgic image of the mythical craft workshop to perceive this. And, as the memoirs of J. B. Dumay or N. Truquin emphasize, young apprentices had often been treated with much brutality by adult workers. (Trequin 1977; Dumay 1976).

Indeed by the 1850s both Corbon and Proudhon were emphasizing that on-the-job training was no longer, by itself, adequate if French workers were to retain a range of adaptable all-round skills. Too many jobs were becoming automatic and repetitive, too many young workers simply being trained for narrowly specialized tasks. Corbon thus argued the need for taught professional courses – although he was suspicious of governmental or employer control of these and argued that skilled workers should have a role in them (Duvean 1947).

Some crafts (jewellery, precious metals) continued to be widely sought after by parents hoping for a 'proper' apprenticeship for their sons. Many of these were still concentrated in central Paris. In 1870 70 per cent of conscripts from some

central *arrondissements* still identified themselves as belonging to a specific trade. In the 19th *arrondissement* this figure was only 30 per cent. Between 1848 and 1860 the city's adolescent population rose by one-third – but the number of apprentices fell from 20,096 to 19,390. More alarming still was the faster decline in that minority – already a mere 25 per cent in 1848 – who had written contracts. Many 'apprentices' were simply being used as cheap labour, learning little. One print-shop in 1867 had six adults and 30 youths. Artisans accused the Catholic Oeuvres des Apprentis of running covert cheap-labour schemes (Gaillard 1977).

The city's juvenile delinquency problem was related to this apprenticeship crisis (Berlanstein 1979, 1980). Most of those arrested were either involved in casual jobs or were marginal apprentices in the overcrowded trades in the faubourgs of north-central Paris. They tended to be less literate than average for the city. They did not tend to come from particularly large families, nor were they disproportionately migrants to the city. The rate of arrests had fallen in the 1850s after the peak of 1847–9, but rose again in the 1860s. These offences were, Berlanstein suggests, more pathetic than frightening. There was much petty theft, relatively little violence and, as yet, few signs of a teenage culture seduced by consumerist temptations. Their familes were fairly 'normal' – but feeling the strain of demographic pressure, housing shortages and of changes in the workplace. Similar studies of orphanage records suggest that though many foster parents appear to have made sincere efforts to provide islands of stability for those in their care, there were real difficulties with some small employers who fostered in order to acquire a 'free boy' for their firm.

Many fled from such masters, or were sacked. Reports hint at a world of harsh treatment, bad food, poor skill training. Such adolescents were as much victims of a crisis in the city's labour system as of home environment. One structural cause of this crisis in the skilled trades was the tendency for employers to transfer production away from Paris, with its reputation for high wages and labour militancy. Porcelain, coarse shirt and button-making, gloves and much of the hat and watch-making industry were moved to the provinces. Free trade after 1860 reduced many Faubourg St Antoine furniture-craftsmen to the role of assemblers of imported tables and chairs. As Gaillard comments, the growing internationalization of the economy could engender either the broad 'internationalist' political perspective of some worker activists – or a xenophobia visible in populist bellicosity at the start of the 1870 war (Gaillard 1977).

Workers were increasingly dependent on orders for 'shoddy' products from agents working for the department stores. Paris artisans were forced to accept declining rates in order to compete with cheap labour in the *banlieue*, the provinces, or abroad. Many were forced to tolerate tighter discipline, abandon 'St Monday', work with cheaper materials. Wider, more anonymous, markets created by free trade and railways made lines of communication in the labour process complex and faceless. Gaillard's statistics show that small-scale production survived – but at the cost of capitalist transformation from within. Workers had to 'specialize' narrowly on a certain stitch or type of hammer blow. Many were reduced to finishing work done in the provinces. Sewing-machines boosted confection clothing outwork, cutting-machines transformed leather-crafts, mechanized saws entered

the carpentry trade. There were 22 operations involved in making cheap jewellry, 10 in artificial flower-making.

Merchants still favoured small-scale 'independent' production since in the 'dead season' they had little fixed capital tied up in machines or factories. But artisans faced wage cuts, rent rises – and were forced to rely on wives' wages to make ends meet. The 'crisis' of the trades was thus real – even if it did not assume the proportions of an absolute fall in 'artisan' numbers. The department store and Haussmann were the twin ogres blamed in populist rhetoric – symbols of the homogenization of the economy by the free market. The brave new world of luxury, leisure, consumption, free trade, wider markets and self-made men was also a world of foreign competition, uprooting, shoddy goods, debased standards, dying skills. Even the Paris cabs and buses were taken over by two 'monopolists', one of whom (Piétri) controlled the public lighting system. The popular discourse of the 1860s emphasized a divided city, workers hounded from their dying quartiers. Gervaise, the heroine of *L'Assommoir*, whose family disintegrates after her husband's work accident, views Haussmann's boulevards as the symbol of her own desolation (Zola 1877). 'Yet underneath the rising tide of luxury from Paris, there was the misery of the faubourgs, spoiling and befouling this new city in the making, put up in such haste.' Haussmann's 'Babylon' came to symbolize capitalism – and the demise of the old, 'real' Paris which the Communards attempted to resurrect.

An insight into the Parisian small-workshop world is provided by Denis Poulet's *Le Sublime* (1870) (Poulot 1980). Its author was an engineering employer – a former foreman at Gouin who later became mayor of the XIe *arrondissement*. He was alarmed at the rise in sympathy for socialism in the late 1860s. He saw his book both as a 'pathological diagnosis' of the 'morbid state' of the working class and as offering a recipe for social stability. Unlike many fellow industrialists he saw a return to simple repression as futile, since authoritarian Bonapartism was now anachronistic, incapable of producing the social peace needed for economic development. It had underfunded state education, whilst pampering its Catholic rival whose commitment to ignorance and blind obedience was dangerous in an era of science. Parisian workers were too deeply anti-clerical to accept Catholicism as a means of social control. Moreover, the regime had relied on an army which wasted resources, on a judiciary biased against the poor and on elites whose values were those of rentiers rather than of entrepreneurs. Hence there was a real danger of a workers' revolt, led by the dregs of the class, which would be suppressed by a reactionary-clerical conservative régime.

Poulot's proposed solution involved a reforming government – preferably a Republic – which would give priority to technical education to equip workers with necessary skills and psychological attitude for modern industry. He favoured moderate trade-unions, on the English model, as a prerequisite for sensible industrial relations. A minority of skilled workers, who at present talked of 'capitalist exploitation', should be given the chance to set up cooperatives to 'exploit themselves'. To succeed, these would have to realize the need for technological innovation, labour discipline, bonus systems. A capitalism 'democratized' along such lines would satisfy the legitimate demands of most workers, leaving militants isolated. The goal was to create *l'ouvrier possesseur*. Unreformed the system

threatened to be a machine with no safety-valve. France faced a terrible explosion. Poulot categorized Parisian workers into eight types. At one extreme was *l'ouvrier vrai* – sober industrious, keen on social promotion, a moderate Republican. Such a man was doubtless, a self-portrait of the author as a young man. But such workers were too often derided as class traitors by fellow workers. Nail-makers' delegates at the 1867 Exposition denounced them as permitting employers to worsen work conditions. Their antithesis were the *sublimes* – undeferential, insubordinate, absent on Saint Monday, endlessly changing jobs, always deriding authority. Poulot cites an example of their ability to use mockery as a weapon. A young worker, reprimanded for breaking a machine, reduced his workmates – and even the employer – to laughter by quoting the catchphrase from a contemporary play 'She resisted me – so I killed her!' The term *sublime* derived from a workers' song which subtly altered the words of a hymn in order to portray the worker not as a 'child of God' but as 'the son of God'!

Fils de Dieu, créatur de Ia terre
Accomplissons chacun notre métier
Le gai travail est la sainte prière
Ce qui plait à Dieu, c'est le sublime ouvrier

Why was *sublimisme* such a danger? Firstly, Poulot argues, because these workers were not just drunken yobs. As A. Cottereau observes Zola, who used the book to research *L'Assommoir*, misread the text by interpreting it in the light of the perennial bourgeois obsession with the dangerous and criminal classes. Poulot's *sublimes* drink heavily only at weekends and on St Monday – and often because of the hot, dusty jobs which they perform. Indeed the *sublimes des sublimes* show a taste for reading, debate, ideas. They are skilled men whose mastery over their fellow workers stems from their ability to discuss endlessly the evils of British rule in India or the need to go beyond a 'formal' to a 'social' Republic. Poulot's dislike for their misuse of their intelligence 'in the service of absurd theories' does not blind him to their abilities. They were the carriers, however, of a 'leprosy' which ravaged the whole working class – for the intermediate categories of workers took them as role models. Cottereau argues that their behaviour was, essentially, a form of protest of skilled workers against new disciplines, work practices, piecework bonus systems, accelerated division of labour. By the late 1860s, barely 3 per cent of Paris workers were truly 'independent' craftsmen. Instead, as gold chain-makers complained in 1867, old skills were becoming useless. Even if workers were employed in small *ateliers* they were tied to the wider capitalist economy. Poulot himself initially had a work force 85 per cent of which was skilled. But he introduced a rivet-making machine to undercut their job control. *Sublimisme* was a guerrilla war against such innovations in a world where the old cooperative alternative was losing its plausibility. *Sublimes* used all possible ruses in daily trials of strength with employers – rejecting overtime, flitting from job to job, slowing production resisting bonus systems. Much of this was a strategy to spread work out, to avoid technological or seasonal lay-offs. Saint Monday itself became part of this strategy – it was not merely 'traditional', or a sign of 'laziness'. Poulot's concern with formal technical training courses was an attempt to undermine the

sublimes by preventing them from passing on their knowhow – and ruses – to the young. Poulot himself had received training at an Arts et Métiers college. He argued that 10 more of these were needed – one for each major industrial sector. Adequate state funding was a prerequisite for this. The money could be found by cutting the army budget. The 'reward' would be an enlarged cohort of *ouvrirs vrais* – and 'no more *sublime* apprentices'. Hence 'to all reformers who cry that the way to regeneration . . . is "no more Capital, no more family, no more property" . . . we will reply by the cry of our profound conviction, "no more *sublimes*" '!

For all his anti-clericalism Poulot shared with Le Play-ists a concern with wife and family as stabilizing forces in worker culture. He hoped that the working-class wife – *la bourgeoise* – could be enlisted as an ally against male insubordination. Her concerns with the family budget could be used to oppose strikes or drinking. Sadly, this was not occurring. Zola misread Poulot's thesis and, in *L'Assommoir* appeared to be arguing that the degradation of workers' family life stemmed from the martyrdom of wives to drunken husbands. Cottereau suggests that one cannot reduce Parisian family culture to this stereotype. Parisian male workers showed little regard for bourgeois marriage conventions. But they tended to take a permanent 'companion' when they were in their thirties, in order to find a partner for their declining years – usually a woman employed in the sweated garment or laundry trades. As Poulot reluctantly concedes, such women were not aspiring *petites bourgeoises* but were quasi-*sublimes* themselves, who vehemently defended their men's lifestyle and attitudes.

Poulot hoped that one way of creating moderate, sensible, productive workers would be to channel the energies of some skilled workers into cooperative ventures. However, he chose to ignore the fact that by the 1860s few such workers retained faith in these as a viable alternative to the capitalist wage-system. Where militants did set up cooperatives in 1867–70 it was often because they had been blacklisted and sought temporary employment. The police were worried that Parisian workers showed no 'gratitude' for the 1864 concessions on strikes, but simply exploited these to press for greater gains. There had been 69 strikes in the city in the eight months after the 1864 law. But Poulot's real nightmare was the involvement of *sublimes* in the public meetings which proliferated in the city in 1868–9 after the relaxation of the assembly laws. They had a level of dangerous half-knowledge which gave them the confidence to stand up and address large audiences and, by debating with liberal economists and neo-Proudhonists, to win applause from admiring *ouvriers mixtes* in the audience.

We know even less about labour relations in large-scale industry or about the attitudes of their workforce. However, one study of the Cail works at Grenelle suggests that workers there, though not immune to the political and industrial agitation of the late 1860s, were by no means in the vanguard of labour protest (Gaillard 1961). The factory had doubled its labour force to 2,800 during the Second Empire by recruiting migrants from provincial metallurgical centres. The nucleus of Parisian skilled workers at the plant retained worker control aspirations which they had attempted to impose on management in 1848. However, since they were unable to fulfil these, they made attempts (1866–7, 1870) to quit the factory and establish their own producer cooperatives. The bulk of the migrants showed

little interest in these ventures, nor in the Parisians' efforts to force management to accept elected worker-delegates. Indeed, the departure of the activists into the cooperative venture deprived the rank and file of potential leaders. Nevertheless, collections were made in the factory for radical Republican electoral candidates in 1869. Grenelle voted 84 per cent anti-Bonapartist in these elections and there was a strike at Cail in 1870. There remains, however, little doubt that workers in large-scale industry provided few leading socialist activists. Only four Cail workers were involved in the First International.

Recent analysis of the public meetings which so alarmed Poulot has questioned the orthodox view that the militancy of Parisian workers in 1871 should be seen primarily in terms of hardships produced by the war and the siege (Faure et al. 1980). For it appears evident that already in 1868–9 militant cadres existed who, via these assemblies, were able to transmit a revolutionary message to a sizable popular audience. The June 1868 assembly law permitted meetings to be held provided that three days notice were given and that police were present to monitor debates which were not permitted to touch directly on 'politics' or 'religion'. Moderates hoped to use these meetings to reach the truths of economic liberalism or the panaceas of mutualism and self-help. But they soon lost the initiative to 'extremists' – Blanquists, neo-Jacobins, First Internationalists. By April 1869 the regime was banning one in seven meetings. It may have come as something of a relief that its crushing electoral defeat in Paris was at the hands of Republicans like Gambetta rather than of the extreme left. But the vigorous renewal of the meetings in late 1869 alarmed them into closing meeting halls and arresting speakers.

Poulot portrayed the *sublimes* as ardent dancers and Belleville as their bastion par excellence. It is therefore significant that the dance-halls and theatres of Belleville – and of Montmartre and Grenelle – were favoured sites for the public meetings. Eighty of the 111 meetings dissolved by the police were in such working-class *quartiers*, often scheduled for 'St Monday'. Whereas meetings held in the city centre tended to be decorous affairs in which speakers extolled the virtues of free trade, science or laic education, those in workers' *quartiers* were more volatile. Audiences responded enthusiastically to rhetoric denouncing workers' expulsion from the Imperial capital, 'Napoleonville'.

In all, 1,300 meetings were held in under two years. On 19 May 1869 23,000 attended such gatherings with, police estimated, a further 45,000 unable to secure entry. It was Blanquist and First International speakers who appeared to win the greatest applause – and who were most vulnerable to arrest. Twenty per cent of the speakers who were prosecuted were to be elected delegates of the Commune. Tony Molinari, an economist who bravely tried to convince popular audiences of the wonders of the free market, confessed that 'out of 10 workers occupied with more than mere eating or drinking, 9 are socialists or are in process of becoming so'. Catholic speakers were greeted with cries of 'Down with the Inquisition'. The most influential speakers such as the Blanquist Rigault and 'left' Internationalists like Varlin shared a broad agreement that it was necessary to mix concern with social issues with an anti-Bonapartist political strategy which should not be 'stolen'

by bourgeois Republicans. Neo-Proudhonists like Tolain found that support for 'apolitical' mutualism was slim.

In some ways the debates on the relationship between capitalism and the state achieved a higher level of analysis than did those of the Commune itself, which was often preoccupied with day-to-day survival. The tone of the debates was 'workerist' and revolutionary. The state apparatus was denounced as the tool of capitalists whose profits came from exploitation of labour. Speakers refused to accept Republicans' attempts to divert popular anger against the clergy and the landowners. Rejecting Bonapartist claims that living standards were rising, orators drew attention to Haussmann's legacy, the housing crisis, the long 'dead season' in many trades. Some speakers called for full educational and employment equality for female workers and denounced the reactionary views of the neo-Proudhonists. But the issue was discussed only rarely. Bonapartism was denounced as a regime installed by a bloody coup and kept in power by a parasitic army which wasted national resources, took conscripts from their homes and jobs and indulged in futile foreign adventures.

Police – present at the meetings – were portrayed as spying on workers, helping landlords to evict tenants. The legal system was denounced for dispensing crude class justice. As Judt has emphasized, it may be misleading to argue that French socialism was weak because it was dominated by rival, squabbling sects of 'home-grown' ideologists whose presence made Marxist penetration difficult. For the dominant strand in the above analysis of French society clearly contained a rough-and-ready vulgar Marxist analysis of French history and politics – combined with a quasi-messianic faith that some day soon a Great Day was at hand when the crumbling capitalist-Bonapartist regime would be swept away (Judt 1986). Bonapartist speakers seeking to plaster over the cracks of the disintegrating Imperial edifice, Catholics, liberal Republicans – 'the people who have already shot us down three or four times' – got a rough reception.

What positive content was there to the 'socialism' being preached? Producer cooperatives were no longer viewed as the solution to the social question. The one-time Proudhonist Lefrançais warned that cooperation was a 'fatal trap' into which the regime was seeking to divert the workers' movement in order to produce 'a new caste of small industrialists'. Strikes were praised as a valid weapon – and collections were made at the meetings for provincial strikers. But Varlin warned that political organization was needed in conjunction with industrial militancy if capitalism was to be expropriated. Education was a subject of some contention. Some speakers simply advocated laic schooling, others warned that the Republican bourgeoisie could use this as a new vehicle for indoctrination. Some urged the need for more technical education for workers, whereas Varlin criticized this as too narrow and said that workers needed to be offered broader cultural horizons. Catholic schooling was denounced as designed to produce ignorant, docile subjects not active citizens. There were calls for civil funerals, and separation of church and state. The issue of relations with the laic Republicans was clearly one of crucial strategic importance. Should one denounce the *fusilleurs de '48* – or accept the need for a tactical alliance with Gambetta? The Republicans were better financed and better organized than the reviving workers' movements. Radical

Republicans like Raspail and Rochefort were popular amongst workers for their vehement anti-clerical and anti-militarist views. Varlin lost heavily when he sought to stand against a Republican candidate in 1869. Any attempt by the socialist left to act on its own was bound to be hazardous – and left-wing activists warned their popular followers to exhibit self-control and not be drawn into rioting (as in May-June 1869 or February 1870) which simply played into the Bonapartists' hands. Troops were sent to Belleville in June 1869 and 900 arrests were made. By the early summer of 1870 show trials were held at Blois of leading socialist speakers. Police raids on the houses of First International and labour activists forced them to adopt a lower profile – and to hand the initiative back to the Republicans.

Hence by 1868–70 most Parisian workers appeared to have lost faith in the regime, most working-class voters had come to view the Republicans as offering a preferable and viable alternative – but most worker activists were prepared to view an alliance with Republicanism only as a short-term tactical necessity. Already by March 1869 Varlin was in confident mood: 'Eight months of public discussion have allowed one to make the strange discovery that the majority of workers who are active reformers are communists. The social question has suddenly surged forward. The communist system – still, however very ill-defined – is more and more in favour.'

3

The Provincial Proletariat

THE FACTORY TEXTILE TOWNS, 1852–1870

The northern textile towns, although exhibiting some militancy during the Second Republic, had never become major bastions of the Dem-Soc left. Similarly, they never appear to have been considered by Bonapartist authorities as posing a threat comparable to that offered by, for example, Limoges or Lyon. Their strike propensity remained relatively low. The orthodox historiography, typified by Pierrard's work on Lille, seeks to explain this 'passivity' of factory textile-workers in terms of the relative 'newness' and lack of skill of the labour force and the sheer all-pervading misery of working and living conditions (Pierrard 1965). In contrast W. Reddy has argued that historians have been too obsessed with looking for classic forms of labour protest such as strikes to discern other forms of resistance activity, and so ready to assume that textile workers were immiserated and downtrodden that they have underestimated the strength and solidarity of their community spirit (Reddy 1984).

Pierrard argues that if misery alone produced revolt Lille would have been the revolutionary capital of France. Instead, he claims, poverty generated fatalism and passivity. In a city which had grown to 160,000 by 1870 36 per cent of the population died leaving under 1 per cent of the wealth (Codaccioni 1976). The town became a byword for ugliness and squalor. Women did washing in streams and canals polluted by sewage and industrial waste. In 1860, by an act of God, a live fish was actually discovered in a Lille waterway. In 1866 typhoid and cholera left 2,000 dead. The notorious *caves de Lille*, the squalid basement apartments which had so appalled Villermé in the 1830s, were still occupied in 1870. The 1850 Melun law on insanitary dwellings remained more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Urban renewal projects produced a new prefecture, wide boulevards but little working-class housing. Amenities in the sprawling popular suburbs of Fives, Wazemmes and Moulins – where population doubled – remained primitive. Domestic life was often disrupted by the fact that parents fled their squalid dwellings to seek refuge in cafés. The rate of still-births caused by mothers working during late pregnancy continued to rise. Forty per cent of children died before the age of five years in the city as a whole, and an astonishing 70 per cent in Moulins. The overall annual death rate was above 30 per cent. Life expectancy

was 24 years – under two-thirds the national average. In the suburb of St Sauveur under one-third of conscripts were fit for military service. Venereal disease and a variety of digestive diseases were endemic. Workers spent up to two-thirds of their income on food. An excessive dependence on potatoes produced phosphate deficiencies and bone diseases. Much food was adulterated or rotten: bad milk left its consumers with fungi on their tongues. Alarmed observers like J. Simon, appalled by the vision of sunken-chested, pot-bellied infants, talked of the 'bastardization of the race'. Medical provision was rudimentary, with workers preferring folk remedies – such as drinking urine to prevent the vomiting of blood – to the risk of going to hospital.

The city had some 26,000 cotton and linen workers – most of them employed in large mills of over 200 workers. Industrial accidents were commonplace as exhausted workers sought to clean moving machinery. Yet in only 1.5 per cent of cases werre employers prosecuted for negligence. Shifts of 13 or 14 hours in humid conditions remained the norm. Up to half of the linen workers were female. Married women often returned to work once their children were five or six. Young children were left with untrained, overworked childminders – or found jobs in the mills. The 1841 Child Labour law was widely evaded, even though – as Heywood has shown – technological innovations in the 1850s and 1860s did lead to a mechanization of some jobs previously reserved for children (Heywood 1988). The proportion of children in the textile labour force was thus in gradual decline. But textile-workers' children remained amongst the worst educated in urban France. Many dozed through the classes for young mill-hands made obligatory under the 1841 law – but which were usually timed for the factory lunch break, or in the evening after work. Literacy rates were barely 40 per cent.

Factory inspector Dupin fought an unavailing battle to regularize mill hours, to enforce legal checks on child labour, to fine parents and employers for breaches of the regulations. In 1867 he was sacked because of protests by factory-owners against his activities.

In a city where poverty was endemic even in boom years, around one-in-six of the population sought poor relief regularly – and up to one in three during industrial slumps. The *bureau de bienfaisance*, under Catholic control, required a certificate of mass attendance from those claiming benefits and denied relief to unwed mothers – illegitimacy rates were above 20 per cent – or to couples living in *concubinage*. Workers were the target of a flood of pious literature, and of Catholic missions preaching against birth control.

Pierrard detects few signs of a sustained militancy. The most sophisticated strikes in the city were amongst its 8,000 metallurgical and engineering workers, who included a high proportion of skilled men. During the 1850s the police's complacency was disturbed only by the influx of pamphlets smuggled by exiled radicals from across the Belgian border. By the 1860s Lille had, like most large industrial towns, begun to vote heavily against the Bonapartists regime. In 1869 the Republicans won 80 per cent of the vote. However, the lawyers and doctors who headed the Republican party concentrated largely on diverting the frustrations of working-class voters against the clergy, accused of overcharging for 'rites of passage' and imposing religious tests on recipients of poor relief. In an effort to

head off working-class unrest the textile *patronat* sought to persuade workers that industrial slumps and lay-offs were the result of Bonapartist free-trade policy and that the remedy lay in a united front of employers and workers to lobby for tariff protection. In short, Pierrard's protrait is of a largely unskilled workforce, which included a high proportion of female and child workers, which was essentially poorly educated, brutalized by appalling domestic and factory conditions and which took refuge in alcohol and in resigned fatalism.

Reddy's first concern is to question this miserabilist orthodoxy which, he claims, derives from social observers (Louis Reybaud; Audiganne) who repeated, ad nauseam, the clichés coined by Villermé. But whereas Villermé had seen workers as primarily victims of laws of supply and demand which inexorably pushed down their wages, his intellectual heirs laid emphasis on workers' own moral vices and penchant for squalor which, they claimed, was the underlying explanation for their filthy homes, promiscuity ande alcoholism. Whilst not denying the existence of deprivation, Reddy questions the stereotyped categorization of workers' morality, culture and politics. The café in the Nord was much more than a place of drink and debauchery. It was a place of warmth, sociability. Workers' mutual aid societies and choral groups were based there. Indeed Pierrard's own work on Lille patois songs emphasizes the role of local singer-songwriters in popular culture (Pierrard 1966). These songs can, studied with due care, be used as 'evidence' of workers' community life. They provide a commentary – albeit usually indirect, sometimes 'coded' – on events. In towns being transformed by rapid industrialization workers were denied the right to organize unions or participate openly in politics. A songwriter in 1852 protrays the prefect 'in good heart', reading out the news of the coup d'etat in the main square and the elites holding a banquet – 'with forks'! – in celebration. As the song notes cryptically, 'the season for talking of politics is past'.

Yet even Audiganne sensed that hopes aroused in 1848 were dormant not dead. For 'nowhere in France is there greater distance between the two great elements who cooperate in production. Defiance, mute yet active has taken root in the depths of the workers soul' (Audiganne 1860). Hence Reddy interprets the popular culture of song and puppet theatre as expressing a certain style of resistance, of ironic if oblique defiance. The apparent absence of overt 'politics' may be deceptive.

A defiant pride in community values emerges from the songs of the region's 'star' songwriter, Desrousseaux. Like Charles Poncy in Provence, Desrousseaux achieved social promotion by his literary efforts. His later *oeuvre* is, thus, of lesser interest – often lapsing into sentimentality. But, Reddy argues, his early song *Casse-Bras* offers a graphic view of worker culture. It deals with a brief episode in the lives of an old working-class couple. He has been made redundant after 30 years in the mill. He and his friends march through the street banging a drum. Bemused onlookers ask each other whether this is a return to the street demonstrations of 1848. The marchers go to a café, where the old man makes a speech critical of his heartless employer. His wife tells him to keep his courage, to grin and bear it and, above all, to stay in Lille where he will have the support of his neighbours. For Reddy the song is significant for its evocation of the use of farce

as a response to hardship, of the stoic courage of the old people and, above all, of the recourse to the companionship of friends.

A number of themes stand out in the songs of working-class songwriters. One is the affection workers felt for their 'dirty old town' – and their feeling that they would prefer it to be unspoiled by 'progress'. For grandiose rebuilding schemes appear to destroy familiar landmarks, to threaten the cohesion of the workers' *quartiers*. Few of the songs deal with factory work – possibly because workers could feel little craft pride in semi-skilled machine-minding jobs. There is a hint of resistance to new industrial discipline. One verse insists: 'We won't listen to what you say / We'll always do our St Monday.'

But, in general, the tone is neither one of anger nor of despair but of stoicism and self-deprecatory humour in the face of hardships. Insofar as workers have aspirations to be other than mill hands, these emerge in their admiration for the 'free souls' in the community – street vendors, pedlars – figures who, like the circus folk in Dickens's *Hard Times*, symbolize a world which has not yet succumbed to the values of Gradgrind.

The songs were written by male workers, and reflect their prejudices on sexual issues. Wives who did not work in the mills were criticized for wasting their time gossiping, drinking coffee – and failing to get meals ready for when their menfolk came home from the factory. They were also satirized as too devout, too deferential to the clergy – and blamed for producing too many children. Pierrard notes that one of the outbursts of anti-clericalism in Lille in the 1860s occurred when workers jeered at a Catholic mission which was preaching against birth control (Pierrard 1965).

Reddy argues that one should not judge industrial relations from strike statistics alone. For industrialists had real problems imposing industrial discipline and complained that they could rarely get workers to run looms at maximum speed. Reddy links strategies of industrial protest with workers' love of puppet street theatre (Reddy 1979). This involved much audience participation, with key catch-phrases becoming standard refrains known to all workers. In 1856 there was a dispute involving the *batteurs* – workers who opened and prepared the cotton fibres, a job needing some knowhow. The dispute went to the Conseil des Prud'hommes, which ruled against the *batteurs*. When they attempted to spread the dispute to other mills the police treated this as a 'conspiracy', hence they faced the threat of arrest if they persisted. Some ringleaders tried to resign from their jobs – but the employer refused to hand them their *livrets*. Their response was to act out in the mill a scene from a well-known puppet play. They took out their pipes and pretended to light them – an action which in the play drew from onlookers the chorus 'No smoking here!' This use of provocative irony was clearly designed to irritate management. It evokes the pranks carried out by skilled metal-workers – the *sublimes* – in Poulot's accounts of insubordination in the workshops of Paris renowned for their militancy. It suggests that the textile workforce should not be assumed to be uniformly docile. In other industrial disputes managers found nooses suspended from the ceilings of the mills with cryptic messages that they would soon be made to dance.

By the late 1860s these forms of symbolic protest were beginning to be

complemented by strikes: 30 per cent of the strikes of 1867–70 were, as Perrot shows, in the factory textile sector (Perrot 1974). In 1867 in Roubaix troops were called in to check rioting as 6,000 weavers came out on strike in protest at the management's refusal to compensate weavers for their efforts in now being forced to operate two looms each. With workers exhausted at the end of the day, threads broke more often – and there was no compensation paid for weaving time lost. One of the wall posters put up during the dispute suggests a mood of overt defiance: 'Notice to mill-owners, shit to Monsieur Delattre (a leading industrialist). Signed Le Bon Louis, guitar player of Roubaix, decorated for his activities in 1848. The Consultative Chamber of Workers says two-loom weaving is suppressed, and no wage cuts. Courage my brothers.' Of course the Roubaix *patronat* retained certain trump cards. It could always rely on playing on tensions between French and Belgian workers – who made up over one-third of the city's workforce. It could seek to divert workers' anger into criticism of free trade, by arguing that a return to Protectionism would guarantee jobs. But it could not take the docility of workers for granted, even though there were no signs in Roubaix that workers were following the example of their counterparts in Rouen and showing interest in the First International (Menager 1983).

Miners, Coal Companies and the Bonapartist State

The most famous strike of the Second Empire occurs in a work of fiction. Zola's *Germinal* (1885) was based on the novelist's own recent visit to Anzin and reading of technical literature on coalmining. But he set the novel in the 1860s; and the violence of the strike was based on two separate incidents in 1869 when at La Ricamarie (Loire) and at Aubin (Aveyron) troops killed some thirty people – miners, women and children (Smethurst 1974). These events were seized upon by opposition politicians as proof that a crumbling regime could maintain order only by brute force and that only a democratic regime would have the legitimacy to provide a framework for stable industrial relations. Socialists claimed that the regime's populist mask had been allowed to slip, so that workers could at last appreciate that in the last resort the Bonapartist state machine was the armed guard of capitalist exploitation.

During 1869–70 there were coal strikes, too, in the north, at Le Creusot, at Bessèges (Gard) and at Carmaux. Republican politicians visited these disputes. City workers collected funds for the strikers. And yet, paradoxically, it is not self-evident to the social historian that levels of political consciousness in the coalfields were high nor that miners were in any way a vanguard element in the resurgent labour movement.

The discourse about miners was highly ambivalent. On the one hand, observers explained 'explosions' such as those of 1869 by a strain of volatility and brutality in pitmen's culture. Zola's own portrait echoes, in part, those of Dr Boëns-Boisseau and other contemporary 'experts' who commented on miners' coarse, savage disposition (Plessey and Chaillet 1984). High illegitimacy rates in pit villages were explained by voyeuristic descriptions of copulation in mine galleries between hewers and young girls employed hauling coal to the pit shafts. A report from Carmaux

(1872) described prostitution as prevalent: 'The young people are of terrifying cynicism and for the female population modesty is such a stranger that they don't take the trouble to hide their vices' (Trempé 1974). The population of Denain consumed 330 litres of beer per capita annually. Periodic outbursts of violence were, thus, viewed as no more than could be expected of such debauched brutes.

And yet such descriptions coexisted with a literature which described miners as passive, stoical, long-suffering, Catholic, childlike semi-peasants rather than as dangerous proletarians. Observers like Reybaud argued that low literacy explained lack of interest in national politics or in ideologies. Dr Boëns-Boisseau claimed that the miner cared nothing 'for our civil struggles and political agitation. The sphere of his intellectual activity only embraces the horizons of his commune'. A police report from Noeux-les-Mines stated that miners were 'not very intelligent and in no way interesting from a political point of view'. Many were still patois-speaking – and local dialect could be used by them to prevent French-speaking engineers from understanding their conversations. The miner-songwriter F. J. Mousseron claimed that miners found patois homely and reassuring in the darkness of the pit: 'Dans la peine un mot de patois nous console davantage.'

A Stephenois miners' song hints at a culture of fatalism, passivity and christian resignation:

Le mineur dit pourtant il faut rester au puits
C'est d'abord pour ma femme et mes chers petits
Ah! peut-etre qu'un jour meilleur
Nous irons tous en paix dans la clarté des cieux.

One way of reconciling conflicting images of the 'typical' miner might be to argue that the population of pit villages was neither homogeneous nor unchanging over time. Coarse brutality was often ascribed to fully proletarianized miners whose ties with farming had been severed. Miners' legendary high rates of fertility were often seen as a 'peasant' characteristic, in marked contrast to the Malthusian family strategies of urban artisans. Indeed, at Carmaux, miners' birth rates were higher than those of the surrounding peasantry – because miners who retained links with peasant agriculture had two income sources and because the pit offered the prospect of child labour. Birth rates tended, however, to fall.

Many miners continued to spend free time on allotments. Reybaud talked of the 'instinct of the miner to dig the soil'. The rhetoric of the *pays noirs* evoked an atmosphere of soot, grime and desolation. Yet many pits were surrounded by open countryside. And the grim tone of much reporting on mining culture did not always take account of the strength of miners' sociability and associational life – music groups, pigeon-fancying, games societies. Zola entered details of these in his notebooks, but omitted them from his novel.

The fear and terror which the mine inspired in its workforce was mingled with a certain pride in a tough, dangerous and essential occupation. One Stephenois pitman's song began:

'Since it gives us fire and flame/
My work is good.'

The miner-songwriter J. Mousseron was to comment that if miners were soldiers, all would wear gallantry medals. Hewers and pit proppers (*boiseurs*) regarded themselves as skilled craftsmen who transmitted their hard-won knowhow to their sons. Brute force was useless. One had to judge the quality of the rock, extract coal without smashing it, be aware of warning smells. Though they had no guild tradition, they developed a craft pride. In the *Cahiers des doléances des mineurs francais*, published in the early Third Republic, Stephenois miners insisted that while 'there does not exist a harder, more repugnant job', they were 'determined to remain in it'. The sense of being 'independent colliers' was reinforced by the system in which teams of hewers were employed by subcontractors, not directly by management.

The number of miners grew from 33,000 to 82,000 under the Second Empire. The new Pas-de-Calais coalfield grew from 500 to 18,000. Anzin's coal production trebled to 3 million tons per year. Until the 1850s half of Decazeville's coal had come from open-cast mining, but the trend was for investment in deeper mines.

Workforce in major coalfields and mining towns

	1850	1875
Pas de Calais	500	18,000
Anzin	4,000	12,000
Loire/St Etienne	6,000	17,000
Monceau	1,340	4,760
Carmaux	1,000	2,000

The character of these communities varied widely. Some – such as Anzin and Loire – had seen mining since the eighteenth century; others were new. Many Loire pits were near to industrial towns with engineering, metallurgical or glass-factories, whilst the Pas-de-Calais pit villages were in countryside amidst farming villages. Many pits in the centre and south – Decazeville, Le Creusot, Carmaux – were in isolated company towns. Old and new technologies existed side by side. Haulage from the coalface was still 'medieval' in many Loire pits, but in the nearby Ondaine valley horses and underground tracks had been introduced. Much mining remained characterized by the symbiosis of industrial and agricultural life. At Carmaux up to 10 per cent of the workforce was absent daily tending their farms. Mining companies were beginning to complain about peasant-miners who arrived late, left early, and saved their energies for their agricultural work. On the other hand they were seen as docile and cheap. The manager of Blanzy complained in 1857 that 'workers from the outside of the region that the company calls in believe themselves to be indispensable and are, in consequence, more demanding and more difficult to contain'.

Most expanding pits tended to recruit the bulk of miners from surrounding agricultural areas – though Gard pits wooed unemployed textile workers from distant Rouen (Huard 1982; Gaillard 1974). There could be frictions between experienced miners and new peasant recruits, accused of jeopardizing safety stan-

dards. There were, as yet, few pits with 'hereditary' workforces, but the percentage of miners whose fathers had worked down the pit was rising.

It is impossible to generalize about pay and hours. The length of time taken by miners to get from pit-shaft to coalface varied widely – and disputes often involved demands for payment for this time. In the Loire miners complained of a 14-hour day, whilst Carmaux management struggled to retain their peasant miners for eight hours. Mine safety was neither as poor as some sensationalist accounts suggested, nor as good as bland managers claimed. The death rate fell from 34 per 1,000 in the 1850s to 29 in the 1860s – rates comparable to those in Britain. A total of 107 died in a pit flood in Bessèges in 1862. But a lifetime in the pits left miners physical wrecks in their early fifties, their lungs filled with coaldust. Zola's old miner Bonnemort has a bowl for his spit – *crachat noir* – 'like those which one puts down for cats for their shit'.

Many miners appeared to acquiesce to company paternalism. Anzin miners locked themselves into a system of 'dependence' – abandoning claims to autonomy in return for a 'deal' which appeared to offer family jobs for life (Tilly 1985). High birth rates in some pit villages may be less linked to miners' psychology than to the economic value of child labour. Anzin offered jobs to male workers of all ages from 10 to 60. Children began by operating pit ventilators or hauling coal from the face before graduating to hewing. As older men's strength failed they were given pithead jobs sorting coal. Zola's Père Matieu comments, 'I have done all the jobs down there.' Girls had haulage jobs, older women washed coal or made *briquettes* from coal waste. Only in 1874 was legislation passed banning underground work for children younger then 12. At Anzin 54 per cent of the workforce in 1867 were below the age of 15. Child labour was much less prevalent in the pits further south – the comparable Stephenois figure was 3 per cent. Assessment of child labour was predictably varied, its defenders insisted that miners' children were 'less delicate than ours' (Anzin Chamber of Commerce). Mousseron, recalling his childhood experiences, said the practice was 'cruel' and gave kids 'terrible nightmares'. But Anzin miners clearly acquiesced to the system as essential to balancing the family budget. Zola's Catherine is an authentic figure of the 1860s – though by the 1880s no girls worked underground. Anzin actually delayed mechanization of underground haulage in order to preserve 'family' jobs. But when faced with pay claims the company replied that miners should be grateful for the job protection they enjoyed.

The hegemony of northern mining companies was reinforced by extensive paternalistic schemes; 90 per cent of Anzin miners live in company *corons*. The annual St Barbe miners' fête began with company-paid clergy leading miners to church and ended with a company banquet and distribution of prizes. Only in 1870 did strikers at Lens demand control of their own mutual aid society. The 29 disputes in the Pas-de-Calais coalfield during the Empire were small and brief. Northern miners' subordination extended to the ballot box. In 1865 39 were sacked at Billy for voting for an anti-management candidate in local elections. By 1870, having learned their lesson, 355 miners voted 'yes' in the plebiscite – and one voted 'no'!

Religion remained central to social control in pit villages such as Blanzy or Grand Combes, where management recruited heavily amongst Catholic peasantry

from the Gard uplands. Opening a company-financed church there in 1857 the bishop of Nîmes urged miners to show 'docile submissiveness to the orders which you receive' (Gaillard 1974). Religious practice remained high in northern coalfield villages where company-owned housing was the norm – in sharp contrast to local communities of glass- and metal-workers. Patois poet Charles Lamy insisted that miners' respect for religion derived from their mothers' example. If they did not always attend Mass regularly themselves, they were happy for their wives to practise:

Ch l'homme qui connait l'ouvrier d'no' regin
Sait qu'dins sin coeur, gard i'por l'erligion
Qu' tient de s'mere un grand respect quand-meme
Le pratique peu, mais lache prier sa femme.

However, the image of coal companies using compliant clergy to dispense social control over a largely *pratiquant* mining population is too monolithic. A minority of clergy protested at Sunday work and at child labour. The vicar of Hoeux-les-Mines denounced the promiscuous sexual mixing of juveniles underground as leading to 'the corruption of girls and of boys . . . to marital infidelity, and, as a direct consequence, to living hell within marriages'. Some clergy complained at attempts of mine employers to treat them as paid employees. In 1865 the curé at Billy was reprimanded for helping a sacked striker: 'It is with us a principle, when we sack a worker, we intend him to be thrown out of the entire mining basin and we do not wish anyone to recommend him in a reference.'

In 1867 the curé of Bethune was threatened by the company for saying that he was the miners' rather than the company chaplain. More frequently, however, clergy expressed distaste for the conduct and attitude of their mining 'flocks' – contrasting these with the behaviour of peasant parishioners. Pas-de-Calais village clergy viewed the spread of the coalfield as a threat to religious practice in the region. One priest, replying to a diocesan enquiry question 'are there any abuses?', wrote simply: 'A large number of mineworkers.' At Billy-Montigny church, attendance amongst miners was under 3 per cent, whereas over two-thirds of peasants were churchgoers. Clergy claimed that miners exhibited a strange blend of 'festive christianity' – a willingness to drink and dance on saint's days – mixed with superstitious fear of ghosts who haunted the mines and with 'materialism'. One Pas-de-Calais curé lamented that miners claimed that the engineer's life was paradise, that of the foreman Purgatory, and their own pure Hell! There were already the first signs of a decline in formal religious practice in the northern coalfields – a trend which was soon to accelerate (Hilaire 1966).

The Carmaux strike of 1869 came after years of changes during which 'peasant-miners' were being proletarianized so that they became 'professionally miners, socially workers'. They had not, however, necessarily been politicized, for there were no hints in strike slogans or demands of involvement with anti-Bonapartist politics (Trempé 1971).

After 1856 new management had determined to meet northern competition by modernization and cost cutting. This had serious implications for the work culture of peasant-miners used to working irregular shifts and disappearing at harvest

time. They now faced longer hours, fines for irregular time-keeping, piecerate bonus systems. Their style of resistance was poised between that of the peasant-miners which they were ceasing to be and that of wage earners which they were in the process of becoming. Initial resistance was sporadic and uncoordinated. Rising food costs and falling real wages in the late 1860s accentuated their grievances. As full-time miners they had less chance to grow their own food. The 1869 strike marked a real watershed. All the miners came out on strike – and resisted efforts of the company to pick off individual categories of workers. They formed their own strike committee, refusing to allow local petty-bourgeois to act as their spokesmen. And yet they mixed new-found maturity with political innocence, blaming individual engineers and foremen for their problems – as if management strategy reflected their personal whims. There was no hint of a challenge to capitalism, and little mention by strike leaders of the wider political challenge to Bonapartism. Indeed strikers' calls of *Vive L'Empereur!* suggested a continued faith in social Bonapartism. Once the strike was defeated and the strike committee dissolved the new-found solidarity appeared to dissipate and the town was quiet in 1870–1.

Commenting on the shootings of miners at La Ricamarie and Aubin the radical journalist Rochefort stated laconically: 'The Empire continues to eliminate poverty. Twenty-seven dead, 40 wounded – there already you have several fewer paupers.' Yet both disputes illustrated that mineworkers' industrial militancy did not necessarily imply significant broadening of political horizons (Reid 1985).

Aubin was close to Decazeville. Both possessed a coalmine and a large iron-foundry. Their joint population had almost doubled to 16,000 during the Empire. Both experienced labour problems as management sought to preserve profit levels by rationalization as the rail boom ended. But the strikes of 1867 and 1869 are more indicative of emerging community solidarities than of political radicalization. The election of 1869 was won by Deseilligny, the new boss of Decazeville's SNHFA company, standing as an 'opposition' candidate. He defeated a pro-Bonapartist *notable* backed by the rival Aubin firm – with the aid of votes from his own workers, to whom he promised improved pay, and of Aubin employees with grievances against their own management. Workers were still behaving as electoral pawns in a feud between rival capitalist enterprises.

Decazeville had come to depend increasingly on its mines more than its iron-works. As at Carmaux rationalization involved disciplining the irregular habits of peasant-miners. Deseilligny, a technocrat, was brought in from Le Creusot to impose a more interventionist management. He sought to replace subcontractors and to hand over hiring and surveillance to company engineers. He hoped to sugar the pill for the workers by paternalism and by introduction of training classes for young workers. But these schemes were still in their infancy, and in the 1867 strike workers vented their anger against individual engineers. By 1869, however, Deseilligny's promises of secure, better-paid jobs had won over many of his workers.

Decazeville's rivalry with Aubin was based on resentments at the latter's preferential treatment by government and the rail companies. In 1869 Deseilligny shrewdly wooed Aubin working-class voters who resented fines imposed for poor-

quality coal by their new pit-manager Tissot, and the lack of basic amenities in the workers' suburb of Gua. In autumn 1869 they came out on strike, invaded Aubin town hall and set fire to the company warehouse. Tissot had to be rescued by troops. Miners made abortive efforts to get foundry workers to support them. A clash between troops and strikers left 17 dead, including two women and a boy.

Reid argues that Gua's inhabitants, lodged in independent boarding houses not in company houses, exhibited signs of emerging community solidarities. Most miners were recruited from nearby Aveyron villages whose culture was based around Catholicism, patriarchialism and on communal and kinship solidarities (Reid 1988). Conversely this region – unlike much of the rural south east and the Midi – had shown little evidence of 'national' political concerns in 1848–51 or of sympathy with the Dem-Socs. Gua workers' demands for their own church may, thus, have derived from sentiments of parish loyalty commonplace in the Aveyron countryside – although studies of more dechristianized rural areas have disclosed similar obsessions for church-as-status-symbol even amongst anti-clerical villagers. One of the specific grievances against Tissot was that he had punished a miner for bringing a priest in to tend an injured colleague. In 1869 Gua voted en bloc for Deseilligny – the type of unanimous vote typical of peasant villages with strong communal ties. In short, Reid suggests, one has here embryonic 'working-class' solidarity – albeit of a non-ideological, 'apolitical' sort – stemming from the village solidarities of 'conservative' peasants. Illegitimacy rates amongst Aubin workers were as low as 3 per cent – in contrast to 10 per cent or more in northern pit villages.

The role of the Bonapartist regime was typically ambivalent. The prefect urged management to negotiate, and criticized Tissot's innovations which 'offended tradition, which is, as it were, the only law of these workers'. State engineers expressed concern at pit safety – and indeed one of these accidentally shot by the troops was a state engineer who had been trying to conciliate in the conflict. After the massacre government pressure got Tissot removed.

As Reid remarks, the strikers represent the sort of 'archaic' protesters with whom orthodox labour history remains ill-at-ease. Although the authorities feared 'contagion' of the Aveyron by more politicized unrest elsewhere, there was little evidence of this. A few Republican *notables* visited the families of the dead. But the miners' anger appeared to be targeted at individual bogeymen – managers, engineers, foremen. The removal of Tissot could be seen as a 'victory'. Neither the regime nor the capitalist system nor the domination of the distant capitalist were questioned.

This situation did change – but only in the 1870s. Deseilligny rationalized the mining enterprise further by establishing a modern coal-sorting system and a briquette works to employ women and children. Paternalism became more sophisticated – with provision of housing and company stores. 'Such supervision, such discipline!', commented one admiring visitor. The system became more authoritarian. Deseilligny, alarmed by the Commune, saw the hand of the First International everywhere and reconciled his technocratic ethos with the Catholic neo-royalism of the Moral Order regime of 1871–6 – 'an energetic authority which does not hesitate at repression', he noted. By the late 1870s when miners protested

against rising accident rates and against the company store their demands for greater freedom for company domination were mixed with a growing involvement in Republican politics (Reid 1985).

In 1869 at Ricamarie troops killed miners, women and a baby when they fired on a crowd seeking to release arrested strikers. The dispute grew out of Stephenois miners' long-standing attempt to control their own mutual aid societies. This issue must be viewed in the context of a coalfield where the adult male pit-worker was the family wage earner – for there were fewer children employed than in northern coalfields and opportunity for female employment in the region was declining. Industrial accidents to the male breadwinner were, thus, a major threat to family subsistence (Hanagan 1986). As the pits in the western part of the coalfield expanded in the 1860s the proportion of miners with wives or children at work fell from 31 per cent to 19 per cent, whilst the birth rate remained high. Meanwhile wage levels which had risen 12 per cent between 1850–8, fell back to well below 1850 levels by the late 1860s. Most miners were now full-time workers, with few agricultural resources. Accident rates were rising: 2 per cent of the coalfield's miners were killed or injured in 1867, and miners were angered at company refusal to pay compensation. An independent mutual aid society was thus seen as crucial for provision of support for families of injured miners.

Initially miners, still voting Bonapartist, put their faith in petitions to the prefect. But by 1869 they were driven to strike action. The strike persisted for weeks after the massacre – ending with a token pay rise and a company-controlled region-wide insurance scheme. Much more than in the other coalfields this dispute developed political overtones. Rondet, emerging as a powerful miners' leader, had lost several relatives in pit accidents. After being sacked for militancy he established a cabaret, was wounded by troops in 1869, then jailed. Released after the fall of the regime he was active in the brief St Etienne Commune. The Loire miners had the advantage of proximity to a major industrial city, of contacts with metal and silk-workers and of support from one of the most powerful provincial Republican movements (see below).

Loire miners' solidarity on the mutal aid issue should not distract attention from a new source of divisions in the coalfield. In 1870 French miners petitioned the prefect to say that whilst they, as patriots, wished to see the Prussians expelled, they equally hoped to see the deportation of Piedmontese miners – 'invaders' who disturbed the mining communities, posed a threat to 'our poor childrens' bread' and a sexual danger, through 'outrages of all sorts of which foreigners are capable', to wives and daughters. Such ethnic tensions were to become endemic in the coalfields in the next half century.

4

Towards 1870

REPUBLICANS, WORKERS AND THE DECLINE OF BONAPARTISM

As the electoral hold of Bonapartism on workers – always very patchy – waned, the unresolved question was whether the outcome would be an autonomous working-class challenge to the regime or whether they would play a subordinate role in an alliance with the Republican bourgeoisie aimed at creating a more 'democratic' capitalism.

In Paris and Lyon this issue was still in doubt in 1869–70, for the labour vanguard remained not merely hostile to large-scale capitalists who still supported Bonapartism – or who yearned for a neo-Orleanist parliamentary alternative – but also suspicious of Republicans who had 'betrayed' the workers in 1848. In other provincial towns, however, the strategic position of the Republicans vis-a-vis labour appeared less problematic. In some cases this was because of the absence of a tradition of independent labour politics, in others because recent industrial changes had made autonomous labour activism more difficult. Republicans were able to exploit regional grievances by appealing to workers, petty bourgeoisie and peasants through criticism of the impact of free trade or of the growing domination of Parisian capital on the local economy.

Republicans could also manipulate non-economic grievances. Whilst proclaiming their patriotism, Republicans criticized the army as wasting national resources and as the tool of internal repression and a needlessly bellicose foreign policy. A Republic, they claimed, would stand for peace, economic progress and a society where families need no longer fear that their sons would be conscripted and their labour lost to workshop or peasant farm. They thus made political capital from the popular disquiet that the post–1867 army reforms would lead to an extension of military service.

Anti-clericalism provided a second vote-winning issue, even though the Republicans' grievances against the church were not identical to those of peasants or workers. The Ligue de l'Enseignement, founded by Republicans in eastern France, campaigned for free, secular education and recruited a number of working-class members (Auspitz 1982).

The identity of the Republican stratum of the bourgeoisie was often forged through intra-class friction with older, more established, *notables* with Bonapartist

or neo-Orleanist sympathies who dominated local politics. Republicans insisted that they were not 'extremists', but realistic moderates capable of ensuring social stability and genuine order. Reliance on army, bureaucracy and religion for social control was now, they argued, outmoded, even dangerous. It generated popular resentments which would produce fresh revolutionary upheavals. A new rhetoric was needed which emphasized democracy, social solidarity, educational opportunity and free association. A broad alliance of 'progressive', productive bourgeois with the rising *nouvelles couches sociales* and the people could, alone, build social harmony and economic progress (Elwitt 1975). Obstacles to this were Bonapartist authoritarianism, clerical obscurantism, royalist landed *notables* and the financial oligarchy. This analysis had echoes of the Dem-Soc discourse of 1849 but with the more 'socialist' elements eliminated, not least because two decades of relative agrarian prosperity had made the potential peasant audience less distressed and less militant than in the Second Republic.

It is, thus, proposed to consider a number of towns (Rheims, Toulouse, Limoges) and regions (the Gard and the Stephenois area) which had a sizable working-class presence, which became opposition centres but where workers were essentially incorporated into a broad Republican coalition. Worker politics was determined in part by labour relations and technology in local industries, in part by divisions within the working class, in part by the ability of 'progressive' elites to co-opt a sizeable proportion of workers.

In the Gard the precarious alliance of bourgeois, workers and peasants which comprised the Dem-Soc 'party' had been shattered in 1851. Fifty died resisting the coup. Militants were jailed or exiled. The revival of opposition thereafter was very gradual. More activists were arrested in 1858. As late as 1863 the very moderate Republican candidates fared poorly. There was no radical newspaper until 1868.

Economic change shifted the balance within the working class. Textiles in Nîmes and the Cevennes declined. The dockers of Beaucaire were victims of the rail boom which stimulated the heavy metallurgical and engineering sector around Alès and the coalmines – whose workforce quadrupled to 7,500. Commercial wine-growing boosted barrel-making.

In the absence of formal, organized radical politics the nucleus for the revival of popular militancy lay in various forms of popular *sociabilité*. Police closed a Nîmes *guingette* in 1855 for its 'socialist' activities. Consumer cooperatives provided 'fronts' for political discussion. Many of the 65 music and singing societies (*orphéons*) kept alive Republican songs. Republican elites took refuge in masonic lodges, limiting themselves to symbolic gestures such as plans to erect statues to Voltaire to challenge ubiquitous statues of the Virgin which proliferated as the Marian cult gathered momentum.

In 1850–1 (see Part II) there had been tensions within the Dem-Soc coalition between bourgeois leaders and the popular rank and file. By 1867–70 there were clear signs of an independent labour revival with offensive strikes in all major industrial sectors for shorter hours, worker control of mutual aid societies and greater pit safety. But there were obvious weaknesses in this movement. The Gard had few independent artisan cadres outside Nîmes, and no branch of the First

International. Most mining and metallurgical strikes were brief and unorganized. Miners at the Portis coal company struck in protest at being charged for use of work tools. They marched *en masse* to the company headquarters – but then wasted time drinking in cafés, allowing management, with army aid, to regain the initiative. Grand' Combes remained a tightly controlled company town where close surveillance of the ballot boxes, ensured a 90 per cent Bonapartist vote in 1863 (Gaillard 1974).

There *were* voices raised urging the need for autonomous labour politics. Nîmes worker-poet Bigot insisted that *all* deputies, whatever their political label, were bourgeois and would betray the workers, and that the effect of laic education would merely be to alienate the literate worker from his class. Maurin, a shoe-maker who also wrote poetry, was jailed for arguing for an independent labour party. But Gard workers were not sufficiently organized to 'go it alone'. Republicans retained the trump cards. One was in the sphere of education. School attendance had risen from 57 to 94 per cent in the Gard since 1849. But many workers – particularly Protestants – were alarmed at the growth in the proportion of pupils taught by the Catholic teaching orders, which had risen from 17 to 39 per cent amongst boys and from 39 to 62 per cent amongst girls. The local Ligue de l'Enseignement had 442 members by 1869, establishing *bibliothèques populaires* in many communes. A petition for free, compulsory schooling received thousands of working-class signatures in 1870 – even 102 in Grand' Combes. The Republicans also campaigned against conscription. But on the social issue the Republicans were studiously moderate. One Republican candidate insisted that 'all legitimate interests are harmonious. Always have present in your minds that there is harmony between the interests of employer and worker – a truth too often fully understood by one or the other, and, hence, the source of all economic upheavals'. Proletariat and bourgeoisie were 'two varied degrees of progress, a common march towards a common destination, with the same point of departure'. Recent labour unrest was not due to irreconcileable capital-labour divisions but to the fact that Bonapartist authoritarianism stifled workers' legitimate associational freedoms. Under a democratic Republic such atavistic disputes would cease. Among Gard Republican notables were, for example, a banker and a grain merchant.

In 1869 Republicans won 31 per cent of the Gard vote, three times the 1863 percentage. Police reported workers attending their rallies 'stinking of wine and, at the very least, wanting solidarity with the people of Belleville'. They did well in workers' areas of Nîmes, Alès and Bessèges. There, the Republican candidate noted, he 'was greeted as a freeman by freemen. The forge-masters respected the workers' liberty'. Conversely in Grand' Combes Cazot got only 7.5 per cent of the vote: 'The police were there to greet me. It was evident that the mines would march against us like a regiment under the eyes of their masters, the Company bosses – an oligarchy the more redoubtable in that they control both the jobs *and* administrative power in the commune.'

A similar pattern of de facto Republican dominance emerged in Rheims. Here technological changes in the textile industry had undermined the position of the handloom-weavers who had spearheaded worker radicalism in the 1840s. The city had grown from 43,000 to 72,000 during the Second Empire as wool weaving and

combing were mechanized in an industry which benefited from the cotton crisis caused by the American Civil War (Gordon 1985). The balance of economic power shifted from older elites – wine and wool merchants – to factory industrialists. The former were Bonapartist. Parvenu industrialists like Holden were conservative Republicans. They paid high wages, were confident in their ability to control their workers, and critical of authoritarianism and clericalism as anachronistic methods of social control. The public prosecutor saw them as optimistic, perhaps excessively so, about their ability to retain workers' support. 'Knowing past revolutions only as theory, they are encouraged by youthful ardour and inexperience to use political agitation to further their ends.' 'Autocratic by instinct', they were, nevertheless, 'democratic through ambition' and were 'preparing for future struggles by courtesy of the working-class'. They offered workers education reforms and played on small-trader resentments at big merchants' control of the Chamber of Commerce. In 1869 they won a majority of votes in the city, but were defeated by the rural vote. By 1875 they had won three seats in the department.

The hegemony of Republican industrialists was based on the industrial and political quiescence of factory-weavers, mostly recent migrants with little affinity with old handloom-weaver radicalism. Holden built company housing projects, a retirement home for elderly employees, and sponsored popular fêtes. There was some industrial unrest in 1867 during the textile depression as workers resisted pay-cuts and lay-offs. This made Republican industrialists slightly wary about encouraging popular opposition to the regime, which might get out of hand. But Bonapartist attempts to play the populist card by encouraging wool workers to establish independent mutual aid societies backfired when Bonapartist mayor Werle a conservative neo-Orleanist, resigned in protest. A handful of workers did attempt to join the First International. But the changed character of the labour force was not conducive to independent labour politics. Moreover, leading workers activist Courmeaux, was a member if the Ligue de L'Enseignement and sympathetic to Republican education policies. In 1869–71 Rheims was on the moderate centre left of French politics, its workers anti-Bonapartist, anti clerical, but safely under the 'democratic patronage' of Republican industrialists.

St Etienne had recorded one of the largest 'no' votes in the plebiscite after the 1851 coup. Its labour radicalism was based, essentially, on silk-ribbon weavers and miners. However even in the Second Republic the labour movement there had been weakened by the occupational heterogeneity of the region. Small-arms, hardware, heavy metallurgical and engineering-workers had been much less militant.

Between 1846 and 1870 the population of St Etienne rose from 49,000 to 110,000. The ribbon sector changed little, despite the appearance of a couple of mechanized mills. Small-arms and hardware remained essentially small-scale. Coal, steel, engineering and heavy metallurgy expanded rapidly. The Manufacture Nationale des Armes headed by Bonaopartist Escoffier and boosted by government orders, employed 5,000. The steel firm Petin Gaudet et Cie introduced Bessemer furnaces and had 8,000 workers. As in Rheims, the politics of the economic elites was fragmented by intra-class rivalries. Silk-merchants and heavy industrialists who received government orders tended to be Bonapartist. But medium-scale steel

employers – Holzer, Dorian – were Republicans. They wooed small-arms firms who had grudges against the MNA (Gordon 1985).

Labour militancy was centred mainly in the mining and ribbon-weaving sectors. In 1869 (see above) troops massacred coalminers at La Ricamarie. Ribbon-weavers, like Lyon *canuts*, faced declining piecerates, Swiss competition and disruption of export markets by the American Civil War. Many of them drifted into debt to merchants, from whom they had borrowed money in order to install new 'Zurich' looms. Most weavers had four looms or less, 84 per cent of them left virtually no property in their wills. They found themselves increasingly reliant on merchants for orders, credit and raw materials. Their skill levels were eroded since new looms produced patterns automatically from perforated cards created by the designers and had a single bar which moved several shuttles and could produce 56 ribbons at a time. As Aminzade notes the outward *form* of the industry – the master-weaver owning his loom and working in his own home – remained, but the realities of power had changed. In 1863 1,100 weavers attempted to set up a producer cooperative (Aminzade 1984).

Republican industrialists distanced themselves from the politics and labour strategies of the coal and ribbon employers. Dorian insisted that 'the principle of obtaining the maximum possible from the working-class by paying the lowest possible wages, such as is practised by some coal companies, is erroneous'. Labour relations in the steel industry were relatively calm. Dorian, a St Simonian technocrat and a freemason, had a vision of 'modern' industrial relations – with a well-paid, well-housed, educated and productive workforce. He deplored the intransigence of employers and the 'brutality' of the regime which could lead to events like the La Ricamarie shootings (Elwitt 1975). He supported laic education. In 1869–71 he emerged as the region's dominant politician. In 1869 St Etienne voted nearly three to one against the Bonapartist candidate. The Republicans organized an orderly victory march. 'The Republic does not stand for disorder and pillage, but for liberty, progress and security', Dorian insisted. In February 1871 he polled three times as many votes as his Legitimist and socialist rivals.

The worker opposition was, it is true, stronger than in Rheims. Radical weaver A. Martin campaigned against Dorian in 1869 and 1871. 'Is St Etienne a village peopled by ignorant serfs? Is it a fief?', he asked. 'The bourgeoisie of the Republican Alliance are no different than the conservative bourgeoisie, since all live at the expense of the working class, and unite against its emancipation.' In April 1871 there was a brief St Etienne 'Commune' in support of Paris, but the attempt of socialist workers to seize the town hall was soon crushed.

The success of Dorian's Republicans reflected, in his part, his shrewd strategies. But it also reflected the main weakness of the Stephenois region's labour movement – the sociological and cultural diversity of its workforce. There were 45,000 ribbon-workers, 16,000 miners, 12,000 metallurgical-workers and 10,000 arms workers. Male artisan ribbon-weavers had a radical tradition and strong community solidarities – but their position was being undermined by growing merchant power and by the use of female – often Catholic labour in rural out-work and new mechanized mills. The Loire miners had a history of protest but their mentality tended to be introverted and corporatist. The metallurgical, engineering and armaments sectors

contained small employers and large-scale capitalist firms. Some skilled metal-workers were independent minded and militant, but others were relatively well-paid labour aristrocrats – for example steel-puddlers – or semi-skilled workers subjected to employer paternalism. St Chamond, for example, remained very much a company town with deferential workers 'grateful' to 'benevolent' employers (Accampo 1989).

These different strata of the Stephenois labour force rarely mixed, tended to have their own separate clubs, cafés and cultural activities (Jacobs 1974). In consequence, the political affiliations of labour in the region were very diverse. Right-wing parties got support from Catholic migrants and rural out-workers. Workers in large, paternalist firms often voted for employers' candidate. Later in the century the miners were to form pragmatic, reformist unions, whilst labour militants – usually artisans or skilled metal-workers – were often tempted into anarcho-syndicalism because they found that the divisions within the working class precluded any effective electoral mobilization of the working-class constituency.

In Toulouse, too, the Republican bourgeoisie dominated opposition politics, winning 80 per cent of the vote in 1869. The city was not a major industrial centre, though it continued to draw in migrants from declining rural textile and iron-forge sectors of the southwest and there were nearly 5,000 factory workers by 1870 in the state arsenal and tobacco industries. Most workers continued to be employed in medium-scale or artisanal workshops, in machine-making, glass, chemicals, paper and the usual range of artisanal trades. However, in shoe-making, tailoring and hatting male artisans faced the classic challenge from cheaper female labour. In clothing trades small-masters, made up of 45 per cent of the workforce in 1850, only 30 per cent by 1869. One furniture employer commented that he preferred to use semi-skilled labour – docile, obedient, assiduous – rather than skilled workers who were difficult to control, animated by a spirit of independence and resistant to bonus schemes. Even when piecerate systems were introduced they were 'far from earning what they could if they worked to full capacity' (Aminzade 1981).

Bonapartists were aware by the 1860s that their hold on the city was crumbling. Workers lived increasingly in their own segregated *quartiers*. The percentage of the population dying without property actually rose from 45 per cent to 58 per cent. When the regime introduced public works schemes to provide employment for furniture workers laid off because of the decline in exports to the USA workers exhibited a distressing lack of gratitude. But labour unrest did not generate an autonomous labour movement. The Republican party was led by the familiar combination of liberal professionals and local businessmen. The latter accused the regime of neglecting the economic interests of the region, of allowing favoured Parisian financiers to starve the southwest of capital and the rail companies to charge excessive freightrates. They claimed that freetrade exposed the region to foreign competition, while poor transport infrastructure and the shortage of local coal hindered efforts to compete with the north. The Republican newspaper *L'Emancipation* proved adept at wooing the city's workers. It played on their *occitan* localism and distrust of Paris. It adopted a quasi-Proudhonist associationist rhetoric and it campaigned vigorously for improved urban amenities for popular *quartiers*.

In Limoges the Republican bourgeoisie were markedly less successful (Merriman 1985). Here employers were conservative neo-Orleanists and were less paternalistic than their counterparts in northern and eastern France. In consequence the working class was held in check in the early years of the regime by 'surveillance and force'. Activists had been arrested in 1851, and there were only three strikes in the first 12 years of the Empire. When the Republican movement re-emerged in the 1860s its leader, the lawyer Perin, took up the issue of amenities in working-class suburbs and printed letters from workers which praised him as the 'guide' of the city's proletariat. However liberal Republicanism proved rather too pale for a city where, as the prefect had commented in 1850, 'socialism has found the deepest roots'.

The nucleus of popular militancy was to be found amongst the skilled sector of the porcelain workforce – turners, moulders, decorators. Though they worked in factories they viewed themselves as 'invaluable' to the production process, as artisans. Their relationship with less skilled workers in their industry was sometimes tense. Indeed it was frictions between skilled and unskilled workers which weakened attempts to establish producer cooperatives. But the two groups of workers lived alongside each other in the popular *quartiers*, met in cafés. And the rural migrants came from a countryside with its own traditions of hostility to *notables* and virulent anti-clericalism.

Even in 1857 the left opposition secured 49 per cent of the vote in the city, with workers voting 'in order and insolence, like a well-disciplined army.' In 1864 porcelain-workers exploited the new strike law and the boom in their industry to conduct a prolonged industrial dispute, which secured support from fellow workers in Vierzon (Cher) and spread to other trades in the city, particularly the shoe industry. By 1869 the prefect was alarmed by the mood. 'It would be a grave mistake', he insisted, 'to think that socialist doctrines which agitate public meetings in Paris are limited only to the major population centres. The workers of our city suffer . . . the same errors.' In 1870 a strike of tapestry workers was described as 'not, in itself, serious but it *is* significant because of the organization that brought it about. It is tied to a movement of emancipation which is spreading with remarkable unity . . . within all of the workers' corporations'. One porcelain employer claimed that two-thirds of his workers were now in the First International. The war, which disrupted markets and led to lay-offs, produced no mood of class unity. Workers responded by calls for a tax on the rich to subsidize municipal public-works' projects – and demanded to be admitted to the National Guard. In the spring of 1871 25 workers were arrested and tried after crowds sought to prevent troop trains departing to fight against the Paris Commune, and the prefect's efforts to sponsor Catholic education were resented by a population which was willing to attend *en masse* the secularist funeral of a veteran porcelain militant from 1848. Though Limogoes working-class resistance was crushed quite quickly, there was little doubt that here, at least, there was popular sympathy for the Paris Commune as a socialist rather than merely as a municipalist and decentralist movement.

WORKERS AND PRIESTS, 1852–1871

Some of the most ferocious or worker hatred was directed not at employers but at the clergy. Of course, insofar as the church was viewed as a central prop of the Bonapartist and capitalist systems, it is not easy to disentangle such sentiments. Nor was virulent anti-clericalism confined to the working class. It was shared by many Republican bourgeois and by sections of the peasantry in the Paris basin, Burgundy, the south-east, the Midi, the centre and the western Massif. A common antipathy to 'clericalism' – a neologism coined in the 1860s – could, potentially, act as a cement to hold together a broad, cross-class, coalition. Astute Republican politicians – including 'progressive' provincial industrialists – were aware of the political mileage to be gained from blaming France's political and social problems on an overpowerful, reactionary, superstitious, authoritarian, obscurantist clergy which stood as a major obstacle to 'progress', defined in terms of democracy, modern education and economic development.

Working-class anti-clericalism thus requires closer analysis. Did it intensify in these two decades and, if so, why? And is it plausible to argue that whilst in 1848 anti-clericalism often coexisted with popular sympathy for an alternatvie christianity to that of the established church – for a social gospel, an egalitarian religion of fraternity – by 1870 the dominant tone was one of hostility to Christianity as such? Was the attempted social revolution of 1869–71 'atheist' in the way that the revolution of 1848 had not been? (Berenson 1984).

There is a case to be made for viewing the Second Republic as a decisive watershed in relations between priest and worker. Popular radicalism of the 1830s and 1840s had clearly contained a strong element of 'Christian socialism'. At the same time, there existed within the Catholic lower clergy and laity a powerful – if minority – voice which argued that the Church ought to condemn the excesses of laissez-faire and show sympathy for workers' justified aspirations for a democratic political system and a more just social order. The group of 'social Catholics' around the short-lived journal *L'Ere Nouvelle* supported social reform, progressive taxation and associationism. If their social views remained rather vague, they were no more so than many radical Republicans who supported *La Réforme*. During 1848 some priests came out in support of their working-class parishioners.

Sadly these groups were marginalized during the political polarization which occurred between June 1848 and December 1851. The most vocal of the 'worker-priests' were disciplined or silenced. Abbé Ledreuille, a Parisian slum priest who had won popular support by his rejection of paternalist charity and his campaigning for job agencies and popular medical and legal aid centres, was disowned by his superiors (Pierrard 1983). In the textile town of Tullins (Isère) abbé Koenig, who sympathized with the Dem-Socs, was first reprimanded by the bishop of Grenoble, then moved to a remote rural parish. The workers of Tullins first protested at his departure, then made the life of his conservative successor a misery for years (Magraw 1970).

During the later stages of the Second Republic Thiers, linchpin of the Party of Order and once a Voltairean scourge of the clergy, called on the church to save the threatened social order by preaching 'that healthy philosophy which teaches

man that he is here to suffer'. Catholics appeared to need no second encouragement. Montalembert, the leading lay 'liberal' Catholic warned that 'it is necessary to choose between Catholicism and socialism'. The Bishop of Nîmes reprimanded the Dem-Socs for claiming Christ as 'the author of their odious heresies.'

The attempt to achieve heaven on earth was a blasphemy. The humble would achieve contentment only through resigned acceptance of their lot. As clergy blessed the expedition to destroy the Roman Republic, the Falloux Law, persecution of lay *institudeurs* and finally the coup d'état, the bitterness of left-wing anti-clericalism increased. In *Le Prêtre* the Dem-Soc poet B. Cohn accused the priests of 'turning a religion of love and liberty into a yoke for the disinherited'. E. Pottier's song *Jésu-Christ rayé des listes é'lectorales* pointed out that the law of 31 May 1850, much praised by the clergy, would have deprived Jesus himself of the franchise.

From Nazarath to Samaria,
As a skilled *compagnon*,
He travelled, this son of Mary,
Wearing his carpenter's *blouse*.

Whilst settled and domiciled as a capitalist,
The usurer, the entrepreneur,
Barbaras is on the voting register.
But Jesus is no longer an elector.

Subjected to the interrogation of the prefect
The Man of God replies
'I no longer have anywhere to lay my head'
Ah – a vagabond without hearth or home . . . !'

The people follow him from town to town.
Upon my word – an agitator,
Inciting the vile multitude!.
Jesus is no longer an elector.

When the coup d'etat arrived Mgr Sibour of Paris hailed it as an act of God, and *Te Deums* were sung in praise of the new dictatorship.

The dominant tone of Catholic social thought thereafter was one of paternalism. Much more than their German counterparts, who succeeded through adoption of a pragmatic reformism in retaining the allegiance of sections of the Catholic working class in the Rhineland, French clergy and Catholic *notables* confined themselves narrowly to traditional 'charitable' enterprises. De Melun, whose Insalubrious Dwelling Act (1850) proved an anodyne and toothless piece of legislation, was active in patronizing projects for Parisian apprentices, agricultural colonies designed to return young migrants to the soil to escape the corruption of the city, 'Christian hotels' intended to rescue itinerant workers from the clutches of dubious *cafés* and *garnis*. The social-Catholic engineer F. Le Play and his disciples in their *L'Ouvrier des Deux Mondes* offered empirical studies of workers' budgets, attitudes, lifestyles – with the aim of creating a body of data which could be used to

reestablish the settled, Christian family as the bedrock for a remoralized working-class culture. A flood of Catholic brochures deluged workers' *quartiers* preaching patient acceptance of one's lot. C. Hebrard's 'Prière de l'ouvrier' began:

> I accept my destiny – yet I have so little strength
> That soon I begin to grumble, and I call for Death
> Instead of offering my suffering to You
> I revolt in vain – without easing my pain.

Even Catholic *notables* like Veuillot, sympathetic to the conservative goals of such literature, were appalled by its crass simple-mindedness, its assumption that the average workers was a cretin with a mental age of six. Cheap novelettes such as Comtesse de La Rochère's 1856 *L'Honnête Ouvrier* portrayed a Manichean world in which pious working mothers succeeded, with the aid of benevolent Catholic *dames patronesses*, in saving their offspring from the clutches of brutal, drunken, irreligious husbands whose minds had been perverted by the thin-lipped, scruffy, balding, bespectacled freethinking socialist agitators. The quietism preached by this literature was complemented by the distinctive features of popular Catholicism of these decades – Marian piety, the Cult of the Sacred Heart, 'Italian' ultramontane spirituality, the obsession with the miraculous. When Catholic workers in Lille requested to be allowed to have some say in the running of the religious society which they had joined, they were told by the *notable* who controlled it that *he* knew the true, Christian worker and such a man would never make such a demand! (Pierrard 1965).

The clergy's role in the sphere of industrial discipline was steadily extended. The archbishop of Lyon took pride in the role of nuns in his diocese who acted as supervisors in the silk convent workshops and helped teach peasant girls to accept the discipline and timekeeping required in the world of factories and machines (Heywood 1989). Mining towns were run as virtual theocracies, with parish clergy and Catholic teaching orders salaried by the management to run schools and paternalist social *oeuvres*. The director of the Blanzy mine, Chagot, was an admirer of Le Play who hoped to recreate in an industrial setting as home-and-family centred, rooted, race of miners who attended Mass and tended their allotments on Sunday evenings. The success of such projects depended, in part, on levels of religious conformity in the peasant communities from which the miners were recruited, in part on the ability of management and clergy to isolate miners from 'contamination' by itinerant, skilled workers such as glass-makers who had a reputation for radicalism, for religious scepticism – and for practising birth control (Hilaire 1966).

Pockets of high religious practice persisted in industrial France in smaller Nord textile towns, in the Stephenois, in Midi towns like Nîmes or Mazamet. And, as male workers frequently lamented, their wives all too often remained loyal to the clergy. Yet working-class anti-clericalism was clearly deepening in intensity, nurtured by a filtering downwards of a vulgarized positivism which merged with rationalist, sceptical, materialist notions which working-class culture had already imbibed from the Enlightenment. Catholicism was associated not only with 'feudalism', and tyranny, but with supersitition, obscurantism, ignorance and absurd

credulity. Older anti-clerical classics – Voltaire, P. L. Courier – circulated in cheap, popular editions. In his *Les lecteurs d'un journal d'un sou* foundry-worker V. Desvaux confessed to his failure to understand Diderot but admitted his liking for Courier's satirical attacks on the clergy's sexual mores. Béranger's songs praising the virtues of decency and tolerance, contrasted with the values of sinister Jesuits – *hommes noirs* – were still sung. The Jesuits were also the villains of Sue's novel *Le Juif Errant*. Ten copies of this were to be found, Dennis Poulot claimed, in the small libraries of his *sublimes*. Much of the rhetoric of anti-clericalism echoed that of Hébert in the Year II. Priests were 'black crows', '*calotins*'. As an observer commented, 'all reason gives way in the French worker at the sight of a clerical garb. But it is not socialist education which so affects him – it is Jacobin atavism'. Less virulent in expression, but no less 'subversive' in content, were *almanachs* such as *La Science du Bonhomme Richard* which preached an ethos of common sense and practical utility in the here-and-now.

The positivist vogue amongst the intelligentsia added a new gloss to older anti-clerical themes. Although the chief audience for Renan's *Vie de Jésus*, for Darwin or for Littré was clearly amongst Republican students, simplified vulgarizations of their main themes became common knowledge. Indeed Boutry notes that in the *bourgs* of the Ain labourers were pooling their resources to buy copies of Renan with which to shock their curés (Boutry 1986). Proudhon's *De la Justice dans la Révolution et dans L'Eglise* argued that the Christian ethic of charity had now become obsolete in a post-Revolution world which demanded justice. The church's intransigent response to such challenges was not merely to condemn science, positivism, democracy et al. in the *Syllabus of Errors*, but to strain the credulity of some of its more liberal supporters by its enthusiasm for the cult of Marian miracles (Lourdes, La Salette). Blanqui's response to the Syllabus was to claim that by its very absurdity it was an unhoped for boost to revolutionary propaganda, the church's 'last will and testament – and a suicide note'.

The clergy's political position was weakened, after 1859, by the rift with the regime over Italy. Faced with a barrage of pulpit denunciations for its 'betrayal' of the Pope's temporal power Bonapartism became less favourable to Catholic schools when forced to arbitrate between them and the Catholic rivals in local disputes. It also eased press censorship to enable liberal papers like *Le Siècle* to express anti-clerical views. This tolerance permitted the emergence of a host of virulent anti-religious journals in 1868–9, many of which soon fell foul of the censors. These included *La Libre Pensée*, of future Communard, Eudes, and some with suitably explicit titles – *L'Athée, Satan*!

There was a familiar litany of working-class complaints against the clergy beyond the obvious accusation that the clergy were the ideological watchdogs of an authoritarian capitalist regime. In Zola's *L'Assommoir* his group of largely apolitical workers who attend the wedding of Gervaise and Coupeau are disgusted by the fact that because they can only afford a few francs the priest gabbles through a rapid service in a side aisle before ejecting them into the street. They mumble insults against the 'blackcrow' who does not treat the rich with such disdain. In his song 'Les voraces lyonnais' E. Randon similarly accused the priests of selling their Credo for *écus*. The man in black resembled those who only allowed you to see the

heavens through their telescope if you put in a franc. In Paris nine classes of funeral were available, graded by price. With the cost of urban real estate in the city rising fact, many of the poor could afford neither a funeral nor a grave. Both weddings and funerals began to acquire ideological overtones. Many militant workers, like N. Truquin in Lyon, were forced – against their better judgement – to go through a religious wedding ceremony in order not to offend their brides or their future in-laws. Funerals became an issue of controversy. Whereas in the 1840s disputes occurred because priests refused to bury known radicals, now dying militants began to request that they receive a secular funeral. A society was set up in Lille in 1866 to ensure that such last wishes were honoured. In 1867 an engineering worker in the city was given a public civil funeral. The worker-poet Doutre, whose writings criticized the mining companies, was buried in this way. Blanquist groups established civil funeral societies in Paris (Pierrard 1983).

N. Truquin's unhappy marriage experience confirmed him in the view that one of the most dangerous divisions within the working class was that between anti-clerical men like himself and pious women who allowed their gratitude to the clergy for charitable donations to lead them to spy on their husbands on behalf of the police (Truquin 1977). Clearly, the obsession with the sinister political hold of priests over women was not just held by bourgeois writers like Zola or Michelet. This influence could also extend to sexual matters. Falling birth rates in the working class indicated that birth control practices were spreading. Priests blamed the man for coitus interruptus, but conveyed their disapproval to the women via the confessional, thereby generating tensions within households. When Catholic missions appeared in popular *quartiers* of Lille to preach against contraception they were booed by crowds of workers.

Workers' interest in education was extremely patchy, not least because many working-class families continued to rely on child labour to balance their budgests. Nevertheless there are signs that workers *were* becoming more convinced of its potential value for their children, even for themselves. The numbers attending adult evening classes rose from 125,000 to 793,000 during the 1860s. Lille's Societé d'Instruction Populaire grouped together workers keen on education. But much of primary education in cities and company towns remained in the hands of the Catholic teaching orders. Articulate workers were unanimous in deploring their own experiences in overcrowded Catholic schools where they were taught to recite the catechism and to respect the social hierarchy. Girls' schools, controlled by nuns, often specialized simply in training female pupils to sew to prepare them for the sweated garment trade. Hence the Ligue de L'Enseignement, founded by Republican veteran Jean Macé, won considerable support from workers. Many of its members in the Yonne, the Rhône, the Gard and elsewhere were skilled workers. Whilst involvement of workers in a bourgeois-led movement whose goals were to create a secular and free education system appropriate to a progressive capitalist Republic was not, in itself, likely to assist the development of autonomous, working-class politics, it is significant that the Paris Commune decided to secularize the capital's primary schools. To that extent laic education was a goal shared by Republicans and socialist workers.

By the late 1860s, therefore, many worker activists were clearly freethinkers

rather than Christian-socialists. Parisian artisans were active in F. Magnin's Proletarian Positivist group. Police who raided the home of Roubaix weaver C. Lécluse in 1867 found copies of eighteenth-century rationalist texts, of E. Sue, and of Renan. The social-Christian strand of the labour movement, represented in the 1840s by the Atelier group, was now virtually extinct. One Atelier veteran, Corbon, had become an expert on technical education. In *Le Secret du Peuple de Paris* (1863) he claimed that the capital's workers had lost their religious faith – as he himself had. By the late 1860s abbé Coutade, a perceptive Paris's priest, warned that

> the working population is on the way to becoming atheist. . . . Hatred is thoughtful, firm, persistent – and it will soon explode. Listen to the echoes of factory and workshop, lend an ear to the rumours of the streets, read the papers the people devour – you priests will find that you top the target list for the workers' scorn.

Hence the attitude of the Communards towards religion and the clergy was virulently Hébertist and Blanquist in tone. One Communard militant insisted: 'It is all over. We no longer believe in God. The 1871 Revolution is atheist. We will carry our dead to their graves, lead our women (sic!) to love, without prayers.' The Christian-socialist strand of 1848 had virtually disappeared. E. Pottier, author of the Internationale' had been a social-Christian in the Second Republic – but was now an atheist. The Club de La Solidarité passed a resolution in January 1871 claiming that 'true human progress will exist when there will not be a single church left standing. When we've got rid of the Prussians, we'll settle our accounts with the priests'. Communard spokesmen insisted that God had had his turn, that mankind was now mature enough to save itself.

During the Commune churches were taken over for use as clubs or storehouses. Graves were dug up to search for evidence of murders of young girls by priests. Schools were secularized, and the Commune unilaterally declared that church and state were separated. In the final days of the Commune Mgr Darboy of Paris and 21 clergy were taken hostage and shot – largely because of the influence of Rigault, a Blanquist medical student who had bitter memories of the clergy's pernicious intellectual hold on the Sorbonne in the 1860s. Varlin's pleas that these executions were a strategic mistake which would simply allow the conservative forces to 'prove' their argument that the Communards were 'men escaped from Hell', was ignored. When Darboy, confronted with his Communard opponents, called them 'my children', he was brusquely told that there were no children present, only grown adults. The clergy had been treating people as children for centuries – and it was time they stopped doing so (Gough 1971).

5

The Paris Commune

The growth of working-class protest in the late 1860s constituted a serious threat to Bonapartist hegemony. During the early part of the decade the régime had sought to offset its loss of support from Catholic and Protectionist sectors of the élites by an 'opening to the left' which involved concessions to labour, including the right to strike. But activists were not satisfied with such palliatives and pushed for wider political freedoms and trade-union rights. By 1869–70 the so-called 'Liberal Empire' was, in practice, shifting rightwards. It sought to rebuild its support amongst business and Catholic interests and to clamp down on labour protest.

The outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war aroused hopes that the mood of patriotic unity would silence internal political opposition. This proved a fatal miscalculation. Military defeat led to the precipitous collapse of the règime, the proclamation of a Republic and the establishment of a government of national defence. In much of provincial France, as noted above, the re-emerging worker movement remained the subordinate ally of bourgeois Republicanism. But the failure of Gambetta's forces to relieve the Prussian siege of Paris led to a different balance of forces in the capital. Here the popular mood blended neo-Jacobin patriotism with the desire for a social Republic. Blanquist activists staged an abortive coup in late October, when news of the surrender of the French army at Metz reached the city. Moderate Republicans came to regard a rapid end to the war as necessary to prevent 'anarchy' in Paris. In January 1871 an armistice was signed with Bismarck and national elections were held in early February, despite the presence of Prussian troops in much of eastern France. To the alarm of Parisians – petty-bourgeois Republicans and workers alike – these saw not merely provincial victories for conservative Republicans but also a sizeable 'peace' vote for neo-royalist rural *notables*.

Paris, which had endured the material hardships of the prolonged winter siege, remained defiant. Workers' clubs had sprung up in the popular *quartiers*. A Comité Central des Vingts Arrondissements was created to coordinate local vigilance committees whose aim was both to continue the war *and* to press for municipal liberties and trade-union rights (Dautry and Scheler 1960). An armed revolt led by the CCVA in January was a failure. But in February the city voted heavily for

both radical-Republican and socialist candidates and was in no mood to submit to the conservative provincial electorate.

The key Parisian institution was the National Guard, which had some 300,000 members. It gave employment to thousands of unemployed workers, many of whom feared that Thiers' new government would make concessions to Bismarck and pave the way for a royalist restoratiron. National Guard leaders had no clear political strategy, but they played a decisive role in mid March by preventing Thiers' troops from seizing the city's cannons. It was this confrontation which paved the way for the Commune.

Thiers had angered a wide cross-section of opinion in Paris by rejecting all demands for municipal self-government and by threatening to end the moratorium on debts and rents and to abolish the 1 franc 50 centimes daily allowance paid to National Guardsmen. He was hoping to end the city's defiance, to reassure Bismarck and to begin to rebuild business confidence in order to raise the money to pay war reparations demanded by the Prussians. The popular mood in Paris was vehemently opposed to this capitulation. And since radical-Republican politicians such as Clemenceau were unwilling to resist Thiers by force, the far left were provided with an opportunity to seize the initiative. In elections in early April the left won 80 per cent of the vote – whereas previously they had secured a mere 25 per cent. The path was now open for the direct confrontation between the Commune and the national government which was to last until the armed suppression of the Commune in late May.

The central point at issue in the historiographical debate on the Commune remains whether or not it should be interpreted as an attempted 'socialist revolution' carried out not only on behalf of but by the Parisian 'working class'. This debate is replete with ironies and paradoxes. Modern liberal-conservative historians express scepticism about any 'Marxist' reading of the Commune in such terms. Yet many of Marx's own comments suggest that he, too, shared some of the same doubts and reservations. Conversely the image of the Commune as essentially a workers' insurrection aimed at creating a socialist society, perpetuated by subsequent left-wing mythology, would have been accepted as self-evidently true by the contemporary French and European right who appeared convinced that 'Communard' really did mean 'Communist' and, thus, that only sane, rational response of civilized men should be to drown it in blood as an exemplary lesson to the popular classes of Europe.

Liberal sceptics begin by insisting that the Commune grew from the Parisians' wounded national and civic pride. Denied municipal rights under the Bonapartist regime, 'betrayed' by a government which, after Paris had borne the brunt of the siege, capitulated to the Prussians, outraged by the victories of 'neo-feudal' reactionaries reliant on rustic votes in the February elections, the inhabitants of the capital – petty-bourgeois as well as workers – responded with a fit of neo-Jacobin defiance which evoked the mood of 1792–3. Even Marx, although he subsequently came to concede that the Parisians were fighting a defensive war, initially described the tone of the *Address to the German People* issued by the Paris sections of the International as one of 'absurd' chauvinism. The lithographers'

union, affiliated to the International, voted to expel its handful of German members!

Moreover, it has been argued, the famous 19 April appeal from the Communards for support from provincial France was couched essentially in federalist and decentralist terms. L. Greenberg has, thus, suggested that the Commune should be interpreted as part of a widespread reaction against the bureaucratic centralization of the Bonapartist regime and the erosion of municipal self-government (Greenberg 1971). Hence the response to it in provincial cities came not just from worker militants but from a broader stratum of liberal and Republican bourgeois eager to create a system of locally accountable municipal and regional government.

R. Tombs has also drawn attention to the significance of the rhetoric used in the early weeks of the Commune to describe the enemy. This was portrayed as a horde of 'Chouans' – ignorant, brutal, superstitious, Catholic rustic idiots. Their leaders, such as General Trochu, were described as heirs of counter-revolutionary, feudal *seigneurs* (Tombs 1986). Such rhetoric served the useful political function *within* Paris of wooing the moderate-Republicans of the city's middle class and their National Guard militia. It provided an ogre against whom the bulk of the city's population could unite – and one which tapped historic memories of the 1790s and of 1848–51. And, hopefully, it could divert attention from potential class divisions *within* the city. The *Père Duchesne* newspaper called for a 'people's wedding: Let us marry the bourgeoisie and the proletariat'.

Furthermore, it is claimed that until the events of March 1871 the socialist left could never claim the allegiance of more than a modest fraction of the capital's population. Even in the militant 18th arrondissement, where the radical clubs were active, they were winning only 25 per cent of the vote (Wolfe 1968). In city elections of November 1870 the far left secured only nine of 80 seats. In the February parliamentary elections Mâlon with 117,000 votes (36 per cent) was one of five 'socialists' to be elected. But Varlin, the most important of the International's leaders, received only 57,000 (17 per cent) and failed to win a seat – whilst most International candidates got less than 50,000 votes. According to such analysis it took the attempted seizure of the cannon by Thiers' troops, fears of a royalist government and a range of specific populist grievances – such as on rents – to 'convert' the mass of patriotic Republican citizens to the cause of the Commune.

Communard policies should therefore, it is argued, be viewed as radical-populist rather than socialist. The obsession with anti-clericalism and with secularizing education was shared by workers and the broad strata of the Republican middle class. The Commune's financial policies proved timid. In order to appease provincial opinion – and in defiance of demands from some local clubs – Jourde and Beslay refused to nationalize the Bank of France and, instead, did a deal with its officials. The Commune's social measures – rent control, a three-year delay in debt repayments, a decree enabling artisans to reclaim pawned tools, the abolition of bakery nightwork – were essentially piecemeal social tinkering rather than a systematic assault on capitalist structures. Although some International militants sought to direct popular anger against 'industrial feudalism', the bogeymen invoked by Communard rhetoric were the familiar ogres of the 1790s – hoarders, princes, speculators, priests. And even the Internationalists' mainstream ideology appeared

to envisage a peaceful social transformation carried out in alliance with the productive, non-parasitic elements of the 'working-bourgeoisie' – a point conceded by the Marxist historian Rougerie who sees this pious hope as a 'double utopia'. Major capitalist factories in the city – the Cail engineering plant, for example – continued to function, their owners making pragmatic deals with the Communards to maintain production for the defence effort (Tombs 1984).

Many of Marx's own observations lend support to this analysis. From the outset he felt that any bid for power was, in the particular circumstances, ill timed and doomed. Bismarck's troops occupied much of northern and eastern France, and provincial support for a Parisian adventure was likely to be, at best, patchy. A number of International leaders, including Varlin, appear to have shared these misgivings. Too many of the neo-Jacobin and Blanquist activists, Marx thought, were men who knew French history too well, who drew their poetry from myths of past revolutions, who dreamed that a coup in Paris would somehow unleash latent revolutionary fervour in provincial France and, indeed, in Europe. By 1880 Marx claimed that the Commune was no more than the rising of a city under wholly exceptional war circumstances. It was not 'socialist' – nor could it have been. Similarly Guesde, the future leader of the Marxist Parti Ouvrier Francais – and himself a Communard – insisted that 'it was not a question of Communism, but of a "Commune" – which is a very different thing'. As Charles Rihs has argued, the very term 'Commune' was so useful precisely because it was simultaneously highly evocative *and* extremely imprecise (Rihs 1955). Some could choose to read into it municipal liberties of the type claimed by medieval communes. Others could view it as a reincarnation of the heroic Republican-patriotic Jacobin Commune of the 1790s. Leftist activists were free to see it as containing the promise of socialism.

Hence one might argue that Marx's *Civil War in France* – which describes the Communards as 'martyrs storming the gates of Heaven', 'glorious harbingers' of a socialist future – should be interpreted *not* as evidence of Marx's real assessment of the Commune's actual nature and potential but, rather, as a bold attempt to salvage a utilizable heroic myth from the wreckage. Perhaps his real view was that the Commune had been a predictable – indeed predicted – disaster which had decimated the vanguard of the slowly reviving labour movement and set back the workers' cause for a generation. He was, of course, aided and abetted in his myth-making task by the behaviour of the right. In 1874 Engels claimed that the Commune was the 'intellectual child' of the International – but that the International had lifted not a finger to provoke it. But French conservatives – and Bismarck – agreed that the Commune had been the outcome of a fiendish plot hatched by the International's occult forces (Roberts 1973). Moreover, they singularly failed to anticipate the findings of subsequent liberal historians that in reality the support for the Commune had come from a socially heterogeneous alliance of patriotic Republicans seeking only municipal liberties. They appeared to actually believe that the typical Communard was a worker and a socialist – as well as, in all probability, being a drunken wife-beater and a criminal. In 1848–51 there had been a certain tendency to argue that the popular rank and file of the June Days had simply been led astray by *déraciné* bourgeois troublemakers. In 1871 the

repression was, in contrast, targeted on the workers. G. Wright has illustrated how conservative bourgeois who had found themselves trapped in Paris during the Commune sought to compensate for the months of impotent rage which they had experienced by urging Thiers to carry out mass extermination of the prisoners – and volunteering to be members of the firing squads (Wright 1977). Even the London *Times* found the bayoneting of prisoners 'shocking', and claimed that the massacres were 'unprecedented' in recent history. One officer asked a prisoner his occupation and then, on hearing the answer, shot him in the face with the laconic comment, 'So it's the stonemasons who wish to rule now is it?' (Marx 1872).

Whatever the limitations of their wider analysis of the Communards – whom they tended to portray as a horde of criminals, drunks, *déclassés*, wife-beaters, feminists and prostitutes (Waldmann 1973) – the right were not entirely wrong in their instinctive perception that the Commune symbolized a real challenge to the social order. They thereby grasped a truth too easily swept aside by recent neo-positivist historiography. By its very existence, Marx noted, the Commune's administration posed an implicit threat to the capitalist state. Club activists insisted that it was no use simply seeking to take over and reform the existing state machinery. This had to be swept away and replaced. They called for popular control of the militia, direct democratic controls via local assemblies – on the model of the *sans-culottes* of the Year II. They wanted popular control over and participation in the bureaucracy, in the interests of a more just and egalitarian social order. Whereas in the Second Republic radical political leadership had tended to be dominated by lawyers and journalists, nearly half of the 80 or so members of the Commune itself were working men. Furthermore, as Schulkind has argued, it is almost certainly more appropriate to judge the aspirations of rank-and-file Communards from the debates and rhetoric of the local clubs rather than from the policy of the Commune executive itself which, for understandable reasons, was preoccupied with the pragmatic priorities of defending and feeding the city (Schulkind 1960).

Two further points require emphasis. The first is that is no longer really plausible to limit the 'causes' of the radical mobilisation of the city simply to the events of 1870–1. The writings of A. Cottereau and A. Faure have made out a persuasive case that a quasi-revolutionary mood had emerged in 1868–9 when leftist activists utilized the 'liberalization' of the Empire's press and assembly laws to reach a wider popular audience alienated both by the Haussmannization of the city, two decades of authoritarian rule and police surveillance and by changes in the workplace (Faure et al. 1980). J. Rancière's analysis of the discourse of delegates from the Parisian trades who attend the 1867 Exposition reinforces the last point. They complained eloquently about mechanization and the division of labour which were turning skilled workers into mere 'machines' (Rancière 1988a). They lamented the deskilling of work processes which produced shoddy goods which no longer did justice to the traditional skills of the city's workforce, which threatened the end of 'artistry'. But they moved on rapidly from complaints about poorly sewn boots to demands for full union and political rights. They rejected both Bonapartist populism and narrow craft-corporatism. And they did not seek remedies for deskilling and dilution in Luddism. Smashing machines was rejected as an outmoded

response. Instead they urged the need for worker control of production. Only then could the process of mechanization be used for the benefit of workers – rather than simply to deskill craftsmen, speedup work and lower the wages and the semi-skilled.

Secondly, J. Rougerie is surely correct to argue that despite the obvious overtones of the 1790s in Communard rhetoric, despite the presence of neo-Jacobins, the recreation of a Committee of Public Safety, the revival of a *Père Duchesne* newspaper, Internationalist leaders like Varlin were using a distinctively socialist language – which was finding a wide audience (Rougerie 1972b). One Communard song contains the verse:

> We have justice on our side, we are in the majority.
> There are no Supreme Saviours–
> Neither God, nor Caesar, nor a Tribune.
> Workers, let us achieve our own salvation by our own efforts.

In similar vein, a wall poster of 8 May protested that any negotiated truce would be a betrayal of workers' hopes for 'a total social revolution, for abolition of all existing social and legal structures, for elimination of all privileges and all forms of exploitation . . . for the replacement of the rule of capitalism by the rule of labour in short, for the emancipation *of* the working class *by* the working class'.

One could, of course, argue that such admirably mature ideological statements merely flowed from the pens of International activists unrepresentative of wider popular sentiments and with little real influence. However, Rougerie has argued that for all its obvious weaknesses, divisions and tactical hesitancies and uncertainties the International did play a significant role (Rougerie 1968, 1972b). In 1868–9 its militants had been in the forefront during the mass meetings. Already the balance of power in the French wing of the International had passed from neo-Proudhonist mutualists like Tolain towards those like Varlin who were groping towards the idea of a workers' party which would combine political and union activity and which was committed to rail and mine nationalization and to workers' control of small industry.

Police harassment certainly took its toll of Internationalist cadres in 1868–70. Yet, even so, there were 28 sections in Paris in mid 1870, with perhaps 1,250 activists. They extended their influence via their popular restaurants (*Marmites*) and through their links with the proto-unions. Of the 60 *sociétés ouvrières* in Paris which were members of the Chambre Fédérale, 20 were affiliated to the International. These included shoe-makers, hatters, cabinet-makers, house-painters, textile-printers, marble-sculptors, jewellers, optical instrument-makers, iron-founders, metal-turners and engineers – a cross-section of the best organized of the city's crafts (Willbach 1977).

However, the International ran into difficulties in the autumn. War mobilization disrupted the activity of its craft affiliates. A planned debate on future strategies for linking political and industrial action was cancelled. There were damaging tactical splits with Blanquists, who had infiltrated the organization, active in the abortive demonstrations of 31 October and 22 January. Varlin had sought to avoid such rash adventurism, seeking to give conditional support to the Republican

government against Bismarck, whilst infiltrating local government, the National Guard and the Central Committee of the 20 *arrondissements*. For several months, however, the International appeared rudderless, unclear of its tactics or of its strategic goals. Varlin's call for a period of study and planning was overtaken by the events of March. Spontaneous popular mobilization appeared to be overwhelming the International's cadres, even if nearly half of the National Guard commanders involved in the March Days were International members.

During the Commune, the International grew to some thirty sections, with perhaps 2,000 activists. In some *quartiers* its candidates won up to 80 per cent of the vote in the 26 March election. At least half of the members of the Commune itself were Internationalists who controlled such key committees as education, food supply and police. Local activists ran education welfare and employment provision in the *mairies*. The typical militant who emerges from Rougerie's analysis of 650 known members was a man in his thirties, drawn either from such crafts as printing, furniture or shoe-making, or from the 'popular intelligentsia'. He was more likely than the average Communard to be married.

Rougerie insists, therefore, that the International had both a physical presence and an ideological and practical role in the Commune, even if tactical splits and strategic indecision in the winter of 1870–1 led to a failure to maximize its potential strengths. The issue of the future organization of industry proccupied those Internationalists involved in the Commission of Labour. A decree of 16 April insisted that priority should be given to producer-cooperatives when public-works contracts were made. Abandoned factories could be confiscated and run by cooperatives. Public labour exchanges should replace detested private job agencies.

Certainly it would be unwise to overestimate the priority given to such issues by the Commune executive or the actual number of cooperatives which came into operation. There were a number of reasons for this. The military defence of the Commune prompted its leaders to compromise with those big private firms – such as Cail engineering – which were willing to continue production. The issue of political power was seen as the overriding concern. Blueprints for cooperative schemes would remain futile unless the Commune succeeded in defeating the besieging forces and democratizing the state. Also, some militants had come to feel that the experiences of the 1860s had shown that cooperatives evolved too easily into petty-capitalist enterprises beneficial only to a dynamic minority. Finally, the circumstances of the siege made the economic viability of cooperatives highly precarious. In that sense, the conditions were less favourable than in 1848 (Tombs 1984).

Certainly there *were* successful cooperatives. Six tailors' associations, involving 2,000 workers, made National Guard uniforms. The newspaper *La Révolution Politique et Sociale* seized on this scheme as symbolic: 'It is giving work – and demonstrating by this fact, the uselessness of employers.' The Commune would dismantle monopolies, 'those bloodsuckers who accumulate capital by turning the sweat of our class into hard cash'. However, the ironfounders' cooperative, which supplied arms to Communard fighters, provides an example of how orthodox and 'respectable' a cooperative might be. It was set up in a factory *rented* from its capitalist owner. The 250 workers involved invited a former *petit patron*, bankrupted

in 1867, P. Marc, to give it professional management. It purchased raw materials and machinery from capitalist entrepreneurs who, in the post-Commune months spoke highly of the honesty and competence of the cooperative's members. In recruiting labour it actually asked to see workers' *livrets*! Its wage levels were actually below the norms in this sector – although it conceded one worker demand of the 1860s by replacing piecerates by a daily wage. It continued to function for several weeks after the fall of the Commune, until Marc and key workers were arrested on charges of supplying the rebels with military equipment. But the fact that they were given *relatively* mild prison sentences suggests that none of them were regarded as leading militants. In short, Tombs argues, Marc should be seen as an archetypal members of that radical-Republican 'working bourgeoisie' which the Communards were keen to woo. On the other hand, it should be noted that some groups of associationist workers did protest to the Commune about its continuation of 'cool but correct' relations with big capitalist firms such as Godillot shoes.

Among the 40 or so cooperative ventures were some involving women workers. Indeed it has been suggested that of all the 'failed liaisons' between the French left and working women (1793, 1848, 1936) that of 1870–1 came nearest to achieving a real marriage (Schulkind 1985). One male worker, writing in the lasts days of the Commune, claimed to have witnessed three revolutions: 'For the first time I see women involved with Revolution. It seems that this Revolution is precisely *theirs* and that in defending it they are defending their own future.'

Schulkind seeks to explain this by suggesting that the influence of Proudhonism on the labour leadership and in the *chambrees syndicales* had been marginalized during the late 1860s, so that crude attempts to exclude women from the labour force, such as that made by the printers in the early 1860s who had argued that illiterate women were too stupid to enter their trade, became less acceptable. Possibly Schulkind may be too optimistic. In his analysis of the reactions of worker delegates to the 1867 Exposition to machines and to female labour J. Rancière offers a more nuanced and complex picture (Rancière 1988a). Certainly, he agrees, the rhetoric of Proudhonist chauvinism became less explicit, and those who used it were sometimes reprimanded. Delegates were coming to argue that if male workers continued to treat women workers as inferior then this was an open invitation to unscrupulous employers to 'dilute' the labour force with lower-paid females. There were, thus, calls for women to receive equal pay with men doing the same job. 'What we are fighting against is not a sex', argued one, 'but an instrument for lowering wages, a cut-price worker'.

However, this apparent 'concession' should not be taken as a sign of any real conversion. The new mainstream position appeared to be that if women had paid employment this should be in areas for which they were suited. They could, thus, replace men who measured ribbons in drapery stores! 'Male' jobs should be reserved for men because in many of these work conditions were damaging to women's health and the atmosphere was conducive to sexual exploitation, harassment and corruption. The ideal solution was for male wages to be raised so that wives need no longer work outside the home: 'We should ask the government to close all the creches – it's bound to agree to do so and then we can concentrate

on getting higher wages, so that our wives can take care of the kids. Women will work at home and will obtain equal rights as promised in 1789.' The rationale behind this thinking, Rancière argues, was that capitalism was increasingly dominating the 'space' not merely of the workshop – via tighter managerial controls, division of labour, mechanization – but of the city itself, via Haussmannization. Male workers therefore came to view 'revolution' as involving themselves winning back job control – by means of cooperative production – and as involving their womenfolk having their own domestic 'space'. The home could then become a refuge of warmth and family solidarity, free from capitalist penetration. This concept coincided, of course, in one respect with the strand of bourgeois thinking which deplored the evil consequences for woman and family of female industrial labour. But it ran counter to bourgeois economic interest in the use of women as a cheap reserve army of labour. And it had little in common with bourgeois and Catholic moralists' desires to use the good, Christian wife as a moderating and moralizing influence on her drunken and radical husband.

Male workers had a vision of themselves as heroes 'rescuing' women from the factory. By tending the home the wife could, in turn, rescue the husband from the constant threat of having, in the event of accident or sickness, to go to hospitals – institutions which they viewed, anticipating Foucault, as disciplinary and penal. It would also save children from the clutches of wet-nurses and of crèches. Above all, as one delegate insisted, 'we wish to make it clear that we want to run our own lives'. This implied, of course, that the male wage earner would be head of the household. Moreover, he could only be in full charge if the family was not dependent on company housing, a facet of provincial working-class life which Parisian workers viewed with horror. In the future associationist Republic the male-run producer cooperatives would, of course, be complemented by consumer cooperatives. It was up to husbands to persuade wives to cease to shop in capitalist stores.

Thus when Schulkind cites the attitudes of International leaders such as Varlin or Frankel, who spoke up for women's paid work as the only path to women's emancipation, he is picking on a group whose ideas were rather more 'advanced' than those of many of the skilled workers who made up the backbone of Parisian organized labour (Schulkind 1985). In 1872 Frankel wrote that:

> all the objections produced against [sex] equality are of the same sort as those produced against emancipation of the negro race. Firstly people are blindfolded. Then they are told that they have been blind since birth. By claiming that half the human race are incompetent, man prides himself on appearing to be the protector of women. Revolting hypocrisy.

Yet if the attitudes of male workers continued to exhibit strong traces of this patronizing paternalism diagnosed by Frankel, there is much evidence that the Commune made a serious effort to grapple with the women's issue. The Batignolles section of the International insisted that, 'it is time to have women participate in democracy, instead of making them enemies by senseless exclusion'. The exaggerated rhetoric of the right which portrayed the Commune as supported by frenzied hordes of female petrol-bombers, feminists, lesbians, prostitutes in quest of blood

and hedonistic pleasure was 'correct' in the sense that women played a much more active role than merely performing 'women's' tasks of nursing the wounded (Thomas 1966). Hitherto there had been little evidence, so male workers thought, that the subproletariat of seamstresses and laundresses of the capital had been actively involved in political debate. Although some of the speakers in the 1868–9 meetings had denounced Catholic education for teaching young working-class girls only catechism, needlework and deference, women's issues had played only a minor part in these debates.

'What difference does it make', Communard militant G. Lefrançais later enquired, 'to a woman whose fingers bleed from making stems of artificial flowers, who ruins her health to earn less than the minimum for subsistence, whether she can vote, hold office, take charge of the wealth she doesn't possess or be as free as her husband to disregard the vows of marital fidelity?' Yet in the spring of 1871 there were signs of change. A seamstresses' cooperative in the 18th *arrondissement* made National Guard uniforms. Tailors and shoe-makers opened up their *chambres syndicales* to female workers and abandoned their initial proviso that women had to make their opinions known at meeting via male members. Plans to establish joint male/female producer cooperatives were about to be realized as the Commune fell. The Commune provided crèches for working mothers and ensured that not only wives but *concubines* of workers killed in the fighting received welfare.

But, above all, there emerged the Union des Femmes pour La Defence de Paris (UFDP) whose organizers insisted that any genuine revolution must have sexual emancipation on its agenda. Earlier revolutions, they argued, had been defeated because male militants had ignored women's issues – thereby driving women into the clutches of Catholic counter-revolution. International journalist Léodile Champseix insisted that:

> if the History of France since 1789 were to be written . . . dealing only with the inconsistencies of the revolutionary movements the question of women would be the largest chapter and it would show how the movements have always found ways to drive half of their troops over to the enemy; troops who had asked for nothing more than to fight at their side.

UFDP leaders acted as intermediaries between the Commune and local women's groups. They had close ties with and support from Internationalists on the Commune's labour and education committees. The latter proposed equal education for female pupils, equal pay for female teachers, and insisted on the need to rescue working-class girls from the clutches of the nuns who taught them only sewing, catechism and deference (Dommanget 1964). The UFDP included a number of *déclassée* female intellectuals. But six of the seven signatories on its first address were working women. Sixty-nine of its 111 identifiable activists were workers in the garment industry. They urged the need for equal pay, proper vocational training schools and, above all, for the 'abolition of all competition between men and women workers, their interests being identical and their solidarity essential for the successful battle of capital against labour'. One of the most impressive of the UFDP's activists was Nathalie Le Mel. She was a Bretonne with three children who had left her drunken husband. She worked as a stitcher in a book-bindery and

was described by her employer as 'rigorously exact, punctual and an irreproachable worker'. She was also involved in running a cooperative workers' restaurant, La Marianne. She was later transported.

In the last weeks of the Commune the UFDP concentrated its activities on providing work. Without this, it was feared, women who had become 'momentarily revolutionary in spirit', might relapse into the 'more or less reactionary and passive state that the social order of the past marks out for them. This would be a disastrous backward step'.

In the immediate aftermath of the Commune, International leader B. Málon claimed that one of its important features had been 'the entry of women into political life', accompanied by the belated revelation that 'women and the proletariat can only hope to achieve their respective emancipation by unity'. Sadly, this was a lesson to which the Third Republic's labour movement appeared, all too often, to pay lip-service but little more.

The Commune had numerous and glaring weaknesses. As Schulkind admits, many of its official pronouncements exhibit a strange blend of pomposity, tired propaganda rhetoric and lunatic fantasy (Schulkind 1972). Despite the contribution of the International, it clearly lacked a coherent, disciplined revolutionary party and – for all the qualities of Varlin, Vaillant and others – any leader of Lenin's stature. There were obvious tensions between 'political' Internationalists, neo-Proudhonists, neo-Jacobins and Blanquists, and between the ideological socialism of many Commune leaders and the Republican pragmatism of many National Guard commanders. However, as Rougerie argues, it may be misleading to exaggerate the extent of sectarian infighting (Rougerie 1960). It was not only the neo-Jacobins who accepted the need for a committee of public safety. Conversely, most neo-Jacobins in the Commune leadership accepted the federalist/decentralist tone of the 19 April appeal to the provinces, just as they went along without protest with most of the quasi-socialist measures. Sectarian ideological feuding tended to grow in intensity over the following decades among the Commune's survivors.

The Commune's defeat persuaded Engels that the heyday of urban insurrection and barricades was now, in the face of modern techniques of military repression, over. The Commune had lasted too short a time to implement its projects. It left no tangible legacy. In some ways it clearly served, to weaken the French labour movement for the best part of two decades. By the autumn of 1871 100,000 of the participants were dead, in exile or in jail awaiting trial.

But who were these insurgents? Victorious conservatives predictably resurrected the old theme of the criminal and dangerous classes. *Le Figaro* denounced them as 'Internationalist and democratic vermin' and called for 'honest men' to exterminate these 'thieves'. The success of the Communards in running the city's administration clearly made it absolutely imperative not merely to punish and intimidate but also to discredit. Thiers told his prefects that the 'horrible sight of masses of corpses' would provide a 'useful lesson' which would keep the masses in their place. The Paris Prefect of Police argued that the mere fact of staying in Paris constituted, in his view, a crime. 'Everyone there is to blame. If I had my way everyone would be punished.' But every effort was made to dredge up some criminal past for the 36,000 who were arrested. 'Not one of them can be considered

a man of politics,' claimed *Le Moniteur Universel* 'we shall treat them as the thieves they are.' Throughout the trials, judges persistently blurred the distinction between worker, insurgent and criminal (Waldmann 1973). Transportation of the guilty to New Caledonia was presented as a long overdue cleansing of the city of its criminal subculture. The ferocity of this backlash intimidated even those radical Republicans like Brisson who sought to secure an amnesty for prisoners, forcing them to insist that they excluded 'criminals' from their appeals for clemency. Delville was jailed for arguing that the Communards should be regarded as political prisoners, not as a subclass of criminals.

The reaction to Zola's novel *L'Assommoir* is symptomatic of the mood amongst the elites in the years after the Commune. Zola wrote the book in 1878, but set it in working-class Paris of the 1860s. His ostensible purpose, as a writer with centre-left radical sympathies, was to show to middle-class readers who the pressures of work, poor education and industrial accidents could push workers towards alcoholism and family disintegration. However, the response of these readers to the novel was not that which Zola intended. They insisted, in the first place that such sordid topics were not a fit subject for decent literature. But they also confirmed two deep-seated prejudices – that workers' poverty was due to their own moral failings not to the social system, and that the Commune was the logical product of a city inhabited by crude, drunken brutes (Barrows 1981).

However, Rougerie's analysis shows that the actual correlation between insurgents and Parisian criminality was no closer in 1871 than in 1848 (Rougerie 1964). Day labourers made up 294 per thousand of those arrested by the Parisian police in 1869, but only 157 per thousand of the insurgents. Conversely, metal-workers, who comprised 124 per thousand of the prosecuted Communards, had made up only 59 per thousand of the 1869 'criminals'. Similarly, *déracinement* theories appear to have little plausibility. Seventy-five per cent of Communards were migrants to the city. But this was no higher than the proportion of migrants in the overall city population. And *recent* migrants tended to be under-represented among the insurgents.

There were relatively few unskilled or 'floating' poor among the arrested Communards. The proportion from the liberal professions and small commerce (15 per cent) was lower than in the risings of 1848–51. The rank and file of the Communards tended, as in the Second Republic, to be drawn from the city's skilled trades. But the role of threatened, sweated trades such as shoe-making and tailoring tended to be less than in earlier revolts. Conversely, that of metal-workers and building craftsmen was substantially greater. In 1871 these two occupations comprised some 18 per cent of the city's labour force – but nearly 30 per cent of the insurgents. The *cadres* of the Commune tended to be drawn rather more from the city's labour aristocracy – printers, skilled wood-workers.

Inevitably, the social profile of the insurgents varied from *quartier* to *quartier*. Belleville was one Communard bastion. In some ways it had taken over some of the reputation for violence and radicalism once held by the faubourg St Antoine. It had been the centre of the 1868–9 public meetings. Eighty per cent of its National Guard were workers. There had been some increase in petty criminality in the winter of 1870–1, but this had been mainly a response to food and fuel

shortages and high unemployment produced by the siege. Many of those involved were *journaliers* from the Buttes-Chaumont area of the faubourg. But *journaliers* made up under 10 per cent of those arrested as insurgents. In contrast, 22 per cent of Belleville's arrested were involved in skilled 'artistic' trades (jewellery, clock-making) whilst 16 per cent were metal-workers. Of Belleville insurgents, 33 per cent were natives of Paris. After the Commune's fall, the forces of order received some information on suspects from *concierges* but, in general, found that most inhabitants refused to offer any assistance to the police. Belleville remained a '*quartier* [which is] unforuntately mute', with the appearance of being 'defeated but not cowed'. The army and police were subjected to constant verbal abuse (Jacquemet 1984).

The bedrock of Commune support seems to have been amongst a Parisian working class which was of an 'intermediate' nature – no longer a class of independent craftsmen, yet not a factory proletariat. Rougerie suggests that this 'working class' was poised between its past and its future – but still leaning towards the former. Even large engineering works like Cail and Gouin, each employing several thousand workers, retained a high proportion of skilled workers highly resistant to factory discipline. Those groups who made up the most vigorous elements of the rank and file of the Communard movement, such as metal-workers, were in no way amongst the poorest elements in the city's workforce. With barely 10 per cent of the Paris workforce in 'large' enterprises, many workers could still envisage the producer cooperative as providing the nucleus for a new social order.

There is some correlation between those workers active in the Commune and trades which were highly organized in *chambres syndicales* which had revived in the late 1860s (Wilbach 1977). In all some 13 per cent of the city's workforce had been involved in such organizations by 1869–70. Some groups which supplied the Commune's cadres had high levels of trade organization – hatters 40 per cent, typographers 30 per cent, engineering workers 32 per cent, jewellers 20 per cent. However, the building trades, who contributed a large proportion of the Commune's rank-and-file activists, had had only 0.53 per cent of their 70,000 or so workers involved in *chambres syndicales* in 1868. And, conversely, some of the artisan elites who had been involved in the worker delegations to the 1867 Exposition remained essentially mutualist reformists and kept aloof from the Commune, including the bronze-worker Tolain.

The massacre of the Communards proved to be more than a crime. It was a political error (Tombs 1981). Class vengeance wreaked by the triumphalist right in the aftermath of their military victory for once lacked the fig-leaf either of legal propriety or patriotism. There were no gestures made to pardon the 'misled' rank and file, who were described by the parliamentary *enquête* as 'drunken and hideous, representing perfectly those types thrown up by riots from the lower depths of the servile rabble'. But the repression gave the Communards posthumous heroic grandeur, made the Commune almost more a force in death than during its brief and confused life. By delaying any amnesty for the Communards until 1880 moderate Republicans deprived it, as Joughin notes, of any real meaning as an act of social reconciliation (Joughin 1955). In electoral campaigns of the 1870s Gambetta was too scared of alientating centrist electors to espouse the amnesty cause.

Hence this was taken up by the variety of leftist groups who, by the end of the decade, were beginning to form the basis of the reviving 'collectivist' movement. Gathering funds for exiled, deported or jailed Communards and their families and publishing the poignant letters of prisoners became central to left-wing propaganda activity. The legend of the Commune as a heroic bid for a just and 'social' Republic hardened into a fundamental tenet of leftist ideology.

All this, as Judt observes, made the rallying of the working class to the 'bourgeois' Republic much more difficult (Judt 1986). It would be futile to deny that the Republic *did* have considerable success in 'integrating' the working class in the decades before 1914. And one might question the relevance of the Commune legend, and of its brand of producer cooperative 'socialism', to the emerging proletariat of coalmines and steel-mills of the 'Second Industrial Revolution'. In some sense, therefore, the path marked out by the Communards was more a cul-de-sac than a highway to the future. The sun on the Communards' banners could be seen as symbolizing the sunset of the historic Parisian artisan insurrectionary tradition rather than the dawn of a new proletarian epoch. Yet every year from 1880 onwards there was to be a huge worker procession in Paris to the Père Lachaise cemetery. This pilgrimage – often marred by clashes with police who sought to confiscate 'seditious' banners – became part of a ritual of a popular counter-culture which refused to be content with the newly invented 'traditions' of the Republic's official 14 July fête. Cartoons in leftist newspapers showed the corpses of the Communards climbing from their graves.

Moreover, as Scott Haine has shown, the Commune figured prominently in the ritualized rhetoric of popular abuse hurled at the police in Parisian cafés until the end of the century (Haine 1988). Even during the period of martial law of the 1870s the authorities found it impossible to fulfil their perennial dream of establishing their hegemony over popular sociability and culture in the capital. As J. Rancière has shown, attempts after 1848 to clamp down on potentially subversive ideas in the songs of the *goguettes* of the *barrières* or of the new cafés-concerts or in the melodramas of the popular theatres had had, at best, limited success (Rancière 1988b). Requirements that singers and playwrights submit scripts in advance for police vetting had failed to curb the spontaneous, improvised repartee and interaction between performers and audiences – a central feature of these forms of popular entertainment. Political censorship silenced radical songwriters like Charles Gille. But even if only plays with impeccably 'moral' and conservative values were performed, their message was likely to be received in very different spirit by the well-to-do audience in expensive seats and the popular audience in the 'gods', who often jeered derisively at moralizing messages.

Haussmann's pet scheme was to tame the rowdyism of the queues of popular spectators, which formed outside the theatres and were entertained by street singers and actors, by establishing a system of advance booking which would allow the working man to have his 'own' seat which, it was hoped, would have the same impact on his attitudes as having his 'own' home. Unsurprisingly the Commune marked a spontaneous popular reaction against such crude efforts at social control. As Henri Lefebvre argued, anticipating by three years the 'festive' atmosphere of the May 1968 'events', the Commune should be interpreted, in part, as a popular

festival in which the Parisian working-class rediscovered its city, its culture, itself. (Lefebvre 1965) A worker-delegate at the 1867 Exposition had voiced the widespread resentment at Haussmannization: 'You have to be totally insensitive', he claimed, 'to wish to dump the working-man outside the centres of social life like this.' In the spring sunshine of 1871 the Communards took their revenge. The Vendôme column, symbol of Bonapartism, was demolished. The Bonapartist family, the police, the clergy and Thiers were the target of a barrage of highly inventive verbal and pictorial satire and caricature (Leith 1977). A revitalized Courbet headed a federation of revolutionary artists. The Commune had its symbols such as the rising sun, its own colour – red. There was a profusion of street theatre and what the conservative Republican Jules Simon later denounced as an 'orgy of singing'.

In the aftermath of this 'festival' authorities faced the problem of putting this genie back into the bottle. They were even reduced to banning patritotic sentiments from plays on the Paris stage, since not only might these offend the German ambassador but, more alarmingly, popular audiences took them as an open invitation to shout out expressions of neo-Jacobin nationalism and of contempt for the traitorous bourgeoisie which had surrendered to the Prussian! (Rancière 1988b). Jules Simon, as Interior Minister in 1876, made vigorous efforts to censor café singing. But he confessed to a feeling of impotence:

> No matter how severely we scrutinize the productions intended for these establishments, no matter how strict the surveillance of the Prefecture of Police may be, the evil today lies in the *very existence* of these places where people smoke and drink, where, in a word, people get together without any conception of morality or art, simply to spend the evening being vulgar. . . . If I were able to suppress them all I wouldn't hesitate for one moment. I am forever pre-occupied with the desire to combat hateful music with honest, decent music. I am always on the lookout. You wouldn't happen to have found any yourself would you?

In time, it could be argued, the authorities were to have some success. If the songs of the later nineteenth century did not improve in aesthetic quality they did tend to become less politicized, as the tradition of worker singer-songwriters declined. By 1900 ex-Communards were lamenting the rise of professional café-concert singing 'stars' who performed anodyne love-songs to increasingly passive, non-participatory audiences. The Communard journalist Jules Vallès returned from exile to find the 'Gallic lark, the French song' in the 'snares of the enemy', the good robust 'wine' of the old songs of Pierre Dupont and other radical songwriters replaced by the 'milk' of commercial pap.

However the Parisian working-class café, in contrast to the late-Victorian pub or music-hall, remained the focus for a popular culture of contestation rather than simply one of consolation. It remained a place where the circuits of leisure and pleasure still overlapped with those of work. And it became the focal point for a ritualized theatre of insult whose targets were the forces of order (Haine 1988). In the 1860s there had been, on average, 792 arrests per year in Paris for insults to the police. This rose to an annual average of 3,000 in the 1870s, 3,500 in the 1880s, over 4,000 in the early 1890s. Almost two-thirds of these incidents occurred

in or outside cafés. And frequently those involved identified themselves as supporters of the Commune – and the police or the troops as 'Versaillais', 'drinkers of blood', rustic idiots who had acted like savage brutes in burning and pillaging the city. 'Is it possible to see filth like you on the streets again?' one worker is alleged to have enquired of a police patrol.

Threats were regularly uttered that 1871 would be avenged, that 'the good times will come again'. The anniversary of the Commune was celebrated in workers' cafés. The social profile of those arrested for clashes with the police mirrors with uncanny precision that of the arrested Communards. Forty-three per cent of the latter had been metal-workers, building-craftsmen and labourers and 40 per cent of those arrested for insulting the police came from these three groups. Often those arrested claimed to have been too drunk to know what they were saying. Judges were not impressed by this defence. As one magistrate remarked: 'I could suppose that your drunken ideas are the same as when you are sober, for your file . . . shows that you are suspected of having served in the batallions of the Commune.' By the 1880s those arrested for calling the police 'rotten pigs, venereal rabble' and similar choice names often appealed for the reviving left-wing newspapers, such as Vallès' *Cri du Peuple*, to take up their cases and protect them from police harassment. Moreover, those arrested in the early 1890s were often too young to have themselves participated in the Commune. They had clearly inherited the ritual of politicized insult from their Communard parents.

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Part IV

Conclusion

1

The Age of Artisan Revolution?

There are plausible reasons beyond mere rough chronological symmetry for ending this volume in 1871. The period between the storming of the Bastille and the Paris Commune does have an essential continuity. And the 1870s do mark a genuine watershed.

1 The decimation of the artisanal vanguard during the repression of the Commune could be taken to symbolize the defeat of the last of a long series of craftsman-dominated urban popular insurrections.

2 The 1870–80s witnessed both a prolonged economic Depression and a 'second industrialization' during which the centre of gravity of the industrial labour force and, in time, of the labour movement, shifted towards the new proletariat of steel-mills, coalmines, heavy-engineering factories and railways. The iconography of the labour movement came to feature muscular miners, railmen and *métallos* rather than shoe-makers, tailors or handloom-weavers.

3 The consolidation of a 'liberal-democratic' Republic by the late 1870s, provided a context within which, for the first time, labour had the opportunity to organize trade-unions, non-clandestine national political parties, and legal, institutionalized forms of protest. Such changes did not, of course, in themselves ensure any rapid, smooth 'integration' of labour into the new Republican synthesis. The experiences and the mythologies of insurrectionism and of 'direct democracy' were too deeply entrenched in popular consciousness for dreams of a revolutionary *grand soir* to be entirely eliminated. The involvement of bourgeois Republicans in the massacre of May 1871, together with the glaring inadequacies of the Third Republic's own social policies, ensured that many workers continued to perceive the Republic as essentially a repressive, 'capitalist' regime little different from its royalist and Bonapartist predecessors.

There had been substantial industrial development during the Second Empire. Yet despite the dominance of factory textiles in the north, Normandy and Alsace, and the stimulation given by the railway revolution to heavy metallurgy, engineering and mining, large-scale industrial enterprise remained the exception, not the norm. In southern cities like Marseilles and Toulouse small-scale production units were still dominant (Sewell 1985; Aminzade 1981). Similarly, the occupational breakdown of the 35,000 arrested Communards offers more evidence of fundamental continuities than of major changes. By comparison with earlier Parisian

insurrections, it is true, Belleville or La Villette had achieved greater prominence at the expense of the faubourg St Antoine. Yet of 4,135 metal-workers arrested (11.9 per cent of the total) many more were from the small *boîtes* of Poulot's *sublimes* than from large engineering plants such as Cail. Similarly, the majority of the 2,791 wood-workers, 1,496 shoe-makers, 5,458 building-craftsmen and 2,413 makers of *articles de Paris* who, together, made up over 35 per cent of those arrested, were also employees of small firms. Moreover, provincial support for the Commune came largely from cities with traditions of artisanal radicalism rather than from factory towns.

Although much of this volume has had as its focus the quasi-mythical figure of the 'radical artisan', every effort has been made to avoid crude occupational determinism, to reject what Tony Judt has correctly diagnosed as the depressing and implausible thesis that a worker's political and social opinions are somehow moulded by the tools he uses (Judt 1986). It should be remembered that 'artisans' and 'proletarians' could, often, be found side by side in popular mobilizations. In the 1830s Lyon master *canuts* – workshop owners radicalized by the experiences of the 1830 Revolution, by the plight of the craft sector of the silk industry and by the new 'workerist' discourse coined by St Simonian disciples – began to term themselves 'working-class' and, almost immediately, to spread propaganda amongst glass-workers and miners – their 'fellow proletarians' – in nearby Rive-de-Giers. During the Second Republic, the latter were not merely calling for workers' control of the pits but appearing in the mass demonstrations in the Croix-Rousse in June 1849 in support of the silk-weavers (Hanagan 1989).

It makes little analytical sense to seek to explain popular mobilizations simply by invoking the artisanal status of the participants. There was no archetypical model 'artisan'. What, if anything, did a migrant Limousin peasant-stonemason, a *compagnon* carpenter, a Lyon 'fancy' silk-master, a rural cork-worker in the Var, and a sweated journeyman shoe-maker have in common – other than that none worked in a factory? In certain contexts, artisans were quite capable of being 'reactionaries' *tout court* rather than Craig Calhoun's 'reactionary radicals' (Calhoun 1983). In Marseilles, Nîmes and Toulouse the populism of Catholic artisans could be expressed in support for Legitimism rather than for the left (Aminzade 1981; Sewell 1974). The artisanal workshop could be the scene of systematic bullying of young apprentices – which may help to explain generational tensions which permitted the government to recruit young craft-workers into the Garde Mobile in 1848 and to use them to suppress the June Days insurrection of middle-aged insurgents (Touquin 1977; Traugott 1985). Furthermore, tensions between masters and journeymen, endemic in the late – Ancien Regime, persisted into the mid nineteenth century, as the records of the Conseils des Prud'hommes indicate. Masters and journeymen could forge a common front against merchant-capitalists. But they could also be at each other's throats, as master-tailors dreamed of returning to disciplined guild hierarchies or sought to cut journeymen's wages. By the 1850s even the solidarities of the world of the *canuts* were under strain as hard-pressed masters laid off journeymen and sought to get by with family and female labour (Sheridan 1981).

Furthermore, as Rancière has warned, the concept of the proud artisan devoted

to his skills and to the 'artistry' of his trade needs careful scrutiny. It may, in part, be a myth 'constructed' by the discourse of an austere, worker élite for their own socio-political purposes. The deliberate creation of a 'workerist' consciousness based on a celebration of the role of producers may have been necessary precisely in order to combat the widespread 'Latin' notion that work was a burden and to counteract the ubiquitous taste of journeymen for drinking and for celebration of Saint Monday (Rancière 1983; Perrot 1985).

There appears much evidence that the world of work was increasingly marked by sexual tensions. 'Proudhonist' male chauvinism gained ground in some trades during the Second Empire as craftsmen sought to hold back the tide of female outwork. In 1848 male tailors at least appeared willing to debate with seamstresses on issues such as the family economy, the location of work in the home or in workshops, the provision of creches for working mothers. Two decades later embryonic *chambres syndicales* of male tailors were demanding a 'family wage' sufficient to allow the return of *la femme au foyer* whilst denying seamstresses the right to speak at union meetings (Rancière 1988a; Scott 1984).

Nor is it plausible to link 'artisan radicalism' to some inexorable, unilinear 'decline' of craft trades. Industrial and urban expansion could multiply opportunities for building-craftsmen, machine-builders and the service trades. The 'typical' framework for many sectors of French industry remained the *fabrique collective* which contained a whole range of production units of different sizes (Zeitlin 1985; Aminzade 1984; Cottereau 1984). Despite the much-lamented decline of formal apprenticeships, 'informal' patterns of training the young via the transmission of knowhow persisted. Above all, the very nature of the markets for French goods precluded any wholesale 'dilution' of artisanal skills. Abroad, the reputation of French products was for quality. The peculiar *niches* in world markets carved out by French exporters were in the fields of up-market goods. In 1851 Britain won 2,000 prizes at the Crystal Palace Exhibition. France came second with over 1,000 prizes – almost all for craft goods. If Britain's future role was to clothe the world with cheap cottons and that of the USA to feed it with the grain from the mid-west, that of France would be to embellish it with goods of taste. Yet under 20 per cent of French craft products were, in fact, exported in 1860. As W. Walton emphasizes, the market for these were provided by French bourgeois housewives, confined to the home by the ideology of 'domesticity', but given the task of beautifying that home with imitation Louis Quinze furniture, hand-painted wall-papers. Moreover, whilst the bourgeois husband dressed austerely in ready-made dark suits, his wife was expected to adorn herself in a range of fashionable dresses, crinolines, corsets, quality shoes. These were made not by such vulgar new inventions as the sewing-machine, but by an army of tailors and *couturières* which multiplied in Haussmann's Paris (Walton 1986, 1989; Vanier 1960).

Hence laments about the imminent demise of 'artistic' crafts were clearly exaggerated, precisely because female bourgeois taste and consumer power helped to perpetuate the key role of artisanal consumer goods production in the French economy. Nevertheless, the 'crisis' of the crafts was no mere figment of artisanal imagination. The survival of much craftwork was achieved only at the cost of increasing subordination of 'artisans' to merchant-capitalism, to international

markets, to department stores – and of changes in the organization of production and marketing which, in effect, deprived masters and journeymen of most of their autonomy. Merchants now controlled orders, raw materials, credit and marketing. The cheaper ends of many crafts were vulnerable to the division of labour, dilution and sweating. Invisible threads now tied domestic artisans to the capitalist system. Behind the façade of craft workshops, labour was being industrialized. As Marx insisted 'this so-called modern Domestic Industry . . . has *nothing* in common except in name with old-fashioned Domestic Industry . . . the existence of which pre-supposed . . . *independent* urban handicrafts'.

It was such pressures which generated the economic circumstances for artisan radicalism, even if Judt and Rancière may be correct to emphasise the importance of political experiences and aspirations in explaining the heightened political and class consciousness of, for example, the early 1830s (Judt 1986; Rancière 1983). Craft resistance focused on the defence of family transmission of knowhow. As the threat of 'faceless', anonymous factory labour grew, so the rhetorical glorification of 'skill' was accentuated. As Perrot has argued, 'the craft was a socio-cultural construct whose ideological representations were ever-more strenghtened as the pressures dislocating the trade became more severe'. And artisans thought and acted 'not in order to prepare a future where proletarians . . . would inherit the legacy of great capitalist industry formed by the dispossession of their labour and intelligence, but rather in order to *arrest* the mechanism of this dispossession' (Perrot 1985).

Stubborn artisanal resistance to the advent of industrial capitalism helped to generate the cycle of repression and revolution which appeared to make it impossible for the state or the capitalist bourgeoisie to offer the type of gradual political and economic concessions through which the mid-Victorian bourgeoisie sought to 'incorporate' the labour aristocracy into mid-nineteenth-century capitalism. Nevertheless, Bonapartism did make efforts to detach certain elements away from the broad populist coalition mobilized by the Dem-Socs in the Second Republic. Prefects sponsored societies of small employers and retailers. Mutual aid groups, cultural societies and charities were all used by the Bonapartist regime to woo these strata whose class identity remained ambiguous and whose political allegiances were fluid. Some 95 per cent of all French 'firms' employed fewer than five workers in the 1860s. But within this world of petty production and retailing there was little homogeneity. Many small enterprises were precarious, under-capitalizaed, ephemeral. Conversely, some small employers and retailers were relatively well established petty capitalists who clashed with their employees over wages and, like the butchers guild in Limoges, were highly conservative both politically and culturally (Merriman 1985). As H.-G. Haupt has commented, 'the structural similarities and combinations of labour and capital common to both groups . . . found such *different* forms of expression, that quite different . . . forms of work and life . . . set the class situation of the proletarianized layers of craftsmen and retailers . . . apart from the rather better-off' (Haupt 1984).

The classic centres of urban radicalism remained, into the 1860s, essentially popular rather than specifically 'working-class' *quartiers*. These were worlds where workers met in cafés which functioned as unofficial labour exchanges, places of

political debate, centres for mutual aid and strike headquarters as well as the *foci* of popular sociability. Similarly, workers often got 'tick' from corner-shop grocers to tide them over strikes and bad periods. The master-artisan, the small building contractor, the *cafetier*, the grocer, the wine-merchant were not, therefore, viewed necessarily as bourgeois or as exploiters. Often they acted as socio-cultural mediators, as scribes who drew up protest petitions. Dem-Soc propaganda during the Second Republic laid emphasis on the importance of a broad class alliance. Popular radicalism was not yet that of solidly proletarian *banlieues*. It was still, to some extent, as in the 1790s, based on the struggle of the 'little men' against the '*gros*'. Many militant workers still aspired to become small employers and, thus, saw nothing incongruous in an alliance with the 'working' bourgeoisie. Jacquemet's study of Belleville, *the* 'red' *quartier* of Paris by 1870, emphasizes that local solidarities remained *popular* rather than specifically proletarian (Jacquemet 1984). By the 1880s the Parisian petty-bourgeoisie was open to seduction by the radical-right populism of Boulangism and of the anti-semitic Leagues. But in the 1860s it remained largely loyal to the *sans-culotte* heritage of radical Republicanism (Nord 1986).

Local 'space' was a key element in power struggles. The reluctance of workers to leave old workshops situated in historic popular *quartiers* and to move to factories was fuelled by fear that this would augment employer control. It was the symbiosis of *quartier* and occupation which had hitherto given strikes both their local character and an important part of their strength – since residential, family and local community solidarities could reinforce those of the trade. Dye-workers in Amiens fought prolonged rearguard actions in order to continue to work in *ateliers* close to their homes (Perrot 1985).

The mobilization of a rural audience had been another important feature of the Dem-Soc movement. The class struggles of 1848–51 had been as acute in the villages and *bourgs* of central and southern France as in the cities. This rural unrest was no mere *jacquerie* provoked by crop failures, falling cash-crop prices and taxes. Those insurgents who resisted the coup of December 1851 included Republican *notables*, café-owners, rural artisans, peasant proprietors and agricultural labourers. The potential threat posed to bourgeois hegemony by artisanal militancy in the 1789–1871 period can only be judged accurately if placed in the wider context of rural protest and rural political mobilization. Perhaps the working-class challenge of 1869–71 was contained rather more easily than that of 1848–51 because the geographical basis of rural radicalism had contracted. The First International established branches amongst Var cork-workers and wine-growers in villages radicalized during the 1840s (Constant 1977). Narbonne, the capital of wine-growing lower Languedoc, had its own miniature Commune. And, as in the Second Republic, the Parisian experiences of migrant peasant-stonemasons helped to politicize the rural Limousin. However, many upland and forest areas which had voted 'red' in 1849 had by 1870 lost their active young due to out-migration, whilst two decades of high crop prices had taken the edge off the radicalism of regions such as Burgundy which would, henceforth, become bastions of anti-clerical radical-Republicanism rather than of agrarian socialism. Nevertheless, one significant feature of French working-class formation may have been that localized traditions

of rural radicalism and of peasant anticlericalism meant that migrants from the countryside to urban industry took with them an undeferential frame of mind which made them open to left-wing mobilization.

A plausible case can be constructed for categorizing the 1870s as a watershed in both the ideological and organizational evolution of popular radicalism. In 1870 Varlin outlined a blueprint for future working-class politics. For the moment, he insisted, tactical alliance with bourgeois Republicanism remained necessary. But an autonomous working-class party with its own candidates should be the goal. This ought to blend political and electoral activity with support for industrial militancy and should mix short-term reformist aims with long-term commitment to the overthrow of capitalism. If the defeat of the Commune thwarted Varlin's immediate hopes, nevertheless by the 1880s parties of the type which he had envisaged were emerging.

Yet the path from 1789 to 1870 had been long and tortuous. As R. Huard has emphasized, an endless succession of groups appeared, disappeared, then reappeared in altered form. France had been, quite obviously, precocious in the sphere of mass politics. The popular mobilizations of 1789–94 and 1830–1 were succeeded by the achievement of universal male suffrage in 1848. And yet the advent of mass parties was to be delayed for several decades. This was, of course, largely due to the recurrence of periods of quasi-authoritarian government which followed brief revolutionary outbursts. During such periods, popular militants took refuge in underground 'secret societies', or in 'camouflaged' organizations which obscured their political activities behind a façade of social or cultural activity. But, inevitably, the history of 'the left' and of the embryonic labour movement became highly fragmentary. This fragmentation was further accentuated by the heterogeneous ideological legacy of the Great Revolution (Huard and Moissonnier 1980).

One strand of this was Jacobinism. This emphasized centralization and Paris-based leadership of a national organization with provincial branches. Its goal was the creation of a radical, secularist democracy whose first task would be to confront the reactionary and clerical elites whose vested interests obstructed the path to a Republic of social justice. Next, there was the tradition of secret societies, passed on from Babeuf via Buonarroti to the Blanquists (Spitzer 1957). Marx was critical of the French obsession with clandestine organizations, which he viewed as excessively elitist and divorced from workers' daily economic concerns and experiences. Yet, to some extent, periods of prolonged repression made such tactics inevitable. Underground movements tended to have bourgeois leadership and socially heterogeneous, if largely popular membership. They created national movements with networks of local cells and tight discipline. Frequently they had initiation rites, oaths of loyalty, passwords – possibly derived from masonic rituals. This was true of the Carbonari, the Société des Droits de l'Homme, the Blanquist Société des Saisons and of the New Mountain secret societies which coordinated resistance to the repression of 1849–51.

Less hierarchical, less disciplined and more socially homogeneous were the wide range of popular groups based on sociability and mutual aid. Some of these such as *cercles* or *chambrées* began as places where middle-class men could meet, drink, play cards and read newspapers before being imitated by the petty-bourgeois,

artisans and peasants of Midi *bourgs* (Agulhon 1982). Meanwhile, itinerant craftsmen retained their *compagnonnage* networks (Sewell 1980). Less exclusive, less hierarchical and generally more flexible were the mutual aid societies which, during the July Monarchy, became increasingly secularized. These gave workers a chance to meet regularly, a right otherwise denied them under the repressive 1834 laws. They emphasized worker independence and dignity and sought to escape from the control of *notable* patrons. In general they frowned on the drinking and brawling which characterized the world of the *compagnons*. They encouraged an ethos of mutual solidarity and of financial aid for the old, the sick, the injured. And many, as was the case with the society of Fourierist shoe-makers in Paris in the 1840s, doubled as labour exchanges for *skilled* workers. Although a few Parisian dockers and market-porters had mutual aid societies, most unskilled workers lacked the regular earnings which made it possible to pay monthly subscriptions. Thus some 90 per cent of the 20,000 Parisian members of mutual aid societies on the eve of 1848 were skilled males (Sibalis 1987, 1989).

C. Tilly has argued that the Second Republic witnessed important changes in the repertoire of popular contention (Tilly 1972). 'Archaic' food riots, Luddism and tax protests gave way to recognizably 'modern' forms of protest activity – trade-unionism, strikes, political clubs, electoral party politics. Certainly in the heady spring of 1848 many of the obstacles in the way of popular political organization appeared to have been surmounted. Political clubs mushroomed. Embryonic unions sought to play a role both in the organization of producer cooperatives in their industries and in the selection of election candidates. Even after the disaster of the June Days the left regrouped under the auspices of the Dem-Soc organization which, in the face of sustained police harassment, established a national network of newspapers and local sections. The police found difficulty in identifying precisely which worker and peasant cafés, *chambrées*, mutual aid societies and cooperatives were acting as 'fronts' for political organizations (Berenson 1984; Merriman 1978; Margadant 1979). It is important to recognize that participation rates in the elections of 1848–9 were above 80 per cent. Modernization theorists have pointed to the rise in literacy, to improved communications and to the cultural brokerage of *notables* to explain these figures. But in some regions, for example in the Limousin, it was migrant workers who provided the cultural brokerage (McPhee 1986; Corbin 1975).

Moreover, as repression intensified in 1850–1, bourgeois Republicans often withdrew from Dem-Soc politics, leaving local organization under the autonomous control of popular militants, usually artisans. Agulhon has argued that the weakening of the Dem-Soc national chain of command pushed local activists back to more 'archaic', 'pre-political' and often violent forms of protest (Agulhon 1982). But one could also view this retreat from electoral politics as a revival of certain ideas of direct popular democracy, free of bourgeois tutelage, which had their roots in the local sectional democracy of the *sans-culottes* and in the communal struggles of the peasantry in 1789–94. This pragmatic of popular direct action was to resurface in the Paris Commune and, later, in revolutionary syndicalism. Parisian workers in the spring of 1848 gathered to debate the choice of worker candidates for the parliamentary elections. And in the small towns of the Midi Dem-Soc

candidates were often acclaimed by crowds in the square before the poll (McPhee 1986). Having entered the electoral system in 1848 as a result of a popular rising in Paris, workers and peasants were determined not to be excluded from the process without a fight.

During the 1840s most artisans had appeared to be sympathetic to Louis Blanc's emphasis that a supportive democratic Republic was the prerequisite for a viable associationist-cooperative movement. But the defeat of the Second Republic and the advent of Bonapartism convinced some craftsmen that they could solve their problems through mutualist associations which could act as if the state did not exist. However, the resurgence of popular politics in the late 1860s marginalized these neo-Proudhonists. In the Gard, as Huard has shown, politicized *cercles*, cafés and cultural groups proliferated. Some organizations central to the revival of political opposition were under bourgeois control, such as the Ligue de l'Enseignement or the bibliothèques populaires, even though a sizeable proportion of their membership came from the popular classes. The Republican movement, which concentrated on issues such as anti-clericalism, anti-militarism and secular education and which had largely jettisoned the associationist socialist rhetoric with which it had flirted in 1848, had a real appeal to working-class voters in 1869 (Elwitt 1975; Huard 1982; Auspitz 1982). Yet there is clear evidence for the re-emergence of a specifically working-class political presence, even if the efforts of the First International to act as an umbrella organization to coordinate workers' political and industrial strategies met with the very limited success. During 1869–71 a whole cluster of popular political groups emerged such as *chambres syndicales*, clubs, the Union des Femmes, the Comité Central des Vingt Arrondissments. Despite the brutal suppression of the Commune these pointed the way forward to trade-union and socialist organizations of the Third Republic.

It might be claimed that those who argue for the 'primacy of politics' in the formation of a distinctive working-class culture in France do underestimate the importance of structural and sociological factors. Yet there is clearly a strong case to be made for the proposition that the 'peculiarities' of the French working class derive from its responses to the experiences of 1789–94, 1830–4, 1848–51. It was by living through alternating periods of insurrection and state repression that some workers came to formulate what might be described, perhaps, as a rough and ready quasi-Marxist analysis (Judt 1986). They viewed themselves as the truly productive class. They interpreted 1789/1830 as 'bourgeois' revolutions which could only deliver the promise of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity once they had been completed by a final, genuinely popular, revolution – conceived of, still, in terms of a short, violent insurrectionary 'Great Day' and leading to a temporary revolutionary dictatorship. Such workers viewed 'the state' as a tool of capitalist repression. The shooting of the Communards perpetuated this image into the late nineteenth and, indeed, into the twentieth century. Even the advent of a liberal-democratic Republic failed to persuade many activists of the viability of the parliamentary road to social reform. Messianic dreams of a revolutionary *Grand Soir* retained some hold on popular consciousness. There were, of course, other workers who insisted that May 1871 proved the futility of outmoded insurrectionary strategies and that the legalization of trade-unions and of working-class parties made the first decade or

so of the Third Republic a genuine turning-point. But their claims never went unchallenged.

It would be futile to deny that there were some improvements in popular living standards in the period 1789–1871. The threat of famine sparked by harvest failure and industrial slump in the context of demographic pressure was still very real in 1846–7, as in 1789. It receded with the Atlantic shipping and railway revolutions of the 1850s. Nominal wages certainly rose during the Second Empire. And yet the period has a certain underlying unity because there is little convincing evidence for a clear and sustained rise in material standards before 1870. Recent historians of the 'consumerist revolution', of which France was a pioneer, have concluded that the brave new world of the department stores, immortalized the Zola's *Au Bonheur des Dames*, remained a largely bourgeois phenomenon until the late nineteenth century (Williams 1982; Miller 1981). Certainly Daniel Roche has claimed that as early as the 1770s the 'people of Paris' were beginning to accumulate stoves, decorated wall covers, mattresses, flowered bedspreads, porcelain plates and mirrors. Following the example of servants, who aped their employers' taste in clothes, artisans were – so Roche claims – acquiring a taste for colourful and fashionable dress. However, one might suggest that, as yet, workers were only likely to be able to afford to copy elite fashions by purchasing refurbished second-hand clothes from the stalls of *fripiers* (old-clothes dealers) (Roche 1981). A more plausible case for a clothing revolution was made by Michelet in *Le Peuple* (1846) when he drew attention to the recent advent of cheap, colourful, light cotton fabrics and of confection ready-made garments. For the first time in history, he claimed, the poor were not obliged to spend their lives in dull, heavy, coarse and everlasting garments (Michelet 1846).

And yet beyond this it is difficult to point to clear evidence of transformed living conditions for urban workers. Life expectancy in Lille or St Etienne remained well below the national average in the 1860s – though the provision of improved water-supply and sewage and the replacement of ergot-infected rye bread by white bread did cut the mortality rates in smaller industrial towns in the Stephenois region (Pierrard 1965; Accampo 1989; Hanagan 1989). Working-class housing remained atrocious, so that there was little incentive for families to devote much care to furnishing or beautifying their homes. Singer-Kerel's statistics for Paris living costs do suggest a 16 per cent rise in real wages between 1840 and 1870 (Singer-Kérel 1961).

1840	78.5
1860	84.9
1870	91.6

But any additional purchasing power tended to be spent on food. In working-class France the phrase *chez nous on vit bien* meant, above all, that one *ate* well.

Studies of family budgets carried out in the 1850s and 1860s by disciples of Le Play discovered that workers were frequently still spending up to 60 per cent of their income on food, a proportion not much lower than in the 1780s (Dauphin and Pézerat 1975). When artisan delegates attended Paris Expositions in the 1860s their response to the goods on display was to emphasize the threat which the

mechanization, division of labour and female 'dilution' required to produce these goods posed to workers' skill and to the working-class family: 'The worker is essentially a *producer*, and *consumes* little. . . . In consequence low-price production. . . . can only be established to his detriment', claimed the report of the delegates to the 1862 Exposition. Only one-third of the space at that Exposition devoted to 'improvements of the conditions of the masses' were actually filled – and that by sewing-machines retailing at 300 francs (Rancière 1988a).

Although one might interpret the Commune as the heroic swansong of the artisan insurrectionary tradition, some historians would choose to emphasize that this tradition was already being diluted not merely by changes in production methods and by de-skilling but by a wider degradation of artisan culture. G. Duveau in his classic study cited the contemporary laments that whereas in the 1840s artisans were autodidacts who devoured utopian socialist brochures and the 'social' novels of Eugéne Sue and sang the protest songs of Pierre Dupont, now they were more likely to be found reading cheap romantic pulp fiction and listening to the anodyne warblings of commercialized *brasserie* singing stars (Duveau 1946). Whether such austere judgements simply reflect the puritanical bias of a narrow craft elite is unclear. Duveau himself cites examples of militants who also had reputations as stylish dancers at popular *bals* or as bowls-players as evidence that there is no necessary correlation between political commitment and renunciation of hedonism. Many of Poulot's '*sublimes*' were known both for their heavy drinking and for their lack of deference (Poulot 1980).

It would be misleading to end this discussion by evoking, yet again, the culture of big city artisans without acknowledging that an 'authentic' industrial proletariat was already being forged in some areas. Until 1840 the St Etienne region had still been dominated by ribbon-weavers or small-arms manufacturers and by temporary or seasonal labourers who moved between harvest-work, nail-making, navvying and part-time mining (Hanagan 1989). By the 1850s a wave of migrants from neighbouring agricultural departments was moving in to take up jobs in steel-mills, coalmines and heavy-engineering factories. Many of these, however, were still temporary migrants who retained ties with their native villages, to which they still aspired to return. Cultural divisions between established workers and newcomers precluded any real 'working-class solidarity'. Flora Tristan was less than complimentary about the migrants, whom she described as 'Beasts! Idiots! Each and every one has the appearance of peasants. The dress of these people is that of the country "citified". Everyone speaks an abominable *patois*. . . . Between these people and those of Lyon there is 40 years difference' (Tristan 1980).

By the 1860s this pattern was already changing. Migration became permanent as the shift to dairy farming in adjacent areas cut the demand for agricultural labourers. Workers began to identify themselves as 'miners' or as 'metal workers' and to marry women from similar 'working-class' backgrounds rather than those from their native villages. They came to resent attempts by employers to manipulate their families via company control of mutual aid societies, accident benefit funds, schools and training courses. Hence the appeal of Republicanism, with its promise of free trade-unions and of secular education. Now that the cooperative socialist dream, which had appealed to ribbon-weavers in 1848, appeared outmoded, it

looked for a time as though St Etienne workers would become loyal electoral supporters of the local 'progressive' Republican bourgeoisie. Yet by 1876–7 delegates from the region to worker congresses could be found calling for the end of the tactical alliance with Republicans – which had been necessary in 1869–70 – and for nationalization of the mines.

Although it would be misleading to lay too much emphasis on the extent of this 'proletarian' consciousness at the end of our period, it would equally, be a mistake to ignore such straws in the wind. The 1869 strike wave was not only almost unprecedented in scale, it was also distinctive in the range of support which it generated. Textile-workers, including factory-workers from Normandy to the Gard, made up 30 per cent of the strikers (Perrot 1974). In the Lyonnais there were significant strikes by women workers, voicing their own specific demands. Striking miners received massive support from their wives. Of course the sociological composition of the Parisian insurgents of 1871 does suggest that the Communards may best be interpreted as the heirs of the *sans-culottes*. The key figure in the iconography and labour remained the building-craftsman – quintessentially masculine, mobile, skilled and undeferential, aware of the seasonal building cycle and capable of mounting 'offensive' strikes. Yet even in Lyon, perhaps the capital of artisanal radicalism, the shift in the centre of gravity towards La Guillotière suggested that the days of artisanal domination of urban protest were drawing to an end.

Teleological visions of working-class history as a victory procession, a long 'forward march' appear sadly inappropriate to our own grim and disillusioned era. As the Jacobin-Marxist historiographical orthodoxy disintegrates it remains unclear what if anything, will take its place – at least for those unable to stomach a revived liberal neo-Whiggism or, even worse, the brand of neo-Taineite counter-revolution peddled so lucratively by Simon Schama (1989). It is not by any means accidental that whereas the 'new left' social history of the 1960s lauded the rediscovered virtues of craft skills and the solidarities of popular communities, recent historiography has either directed its focus onto sectional, sexual, racial and generational divisions within the 'working class' – or has 'deconstructed' that class and concluded that it never very much more than a construct created by a discourse 'about' workers conducted largely by the bourgeoisie, by *déraciné* intellectuals and by atypical autodidact skilled craftsmen.

Certainly, few of the individuals whose lives and experience provide the raw material for this book actually aspired to be or to become 'proletarian'. Most, indeed, struggled hard to resist any such fate. This does not apply only to skilled craftsmen. As Reddy has argued, many textile factory-workers refused to see themselves as 'mill-hands' but, instead, obstinately clung to the image of themselves as independent out-workers within the mill (Reddy 1984). Meanwhile, an army of out-workers in the Lyonnais, Picardy, Normandy, the Mayenne . . . clung equally stubbornly to their 'freedom', preferred 'pluri-activity' and part-time agricultural labour to the prospect of higher wages in the factory. The first generations of migrants from the countryside dreamed, not entirely unrealistically, of returning one day to their family farms. Company paternalism represented an effort by large employers to attract, retain and mould, a stable workforce in a France where

popular rhetoric continued to portray industrial capitalism as a 'new feudalism', the factory as a 'prison' or a 'barracks' – and where strikers' rhetoric all too often suggested that the best thing to do with such 'Bastilles' was to blow them up. In the 1830s the Rouen textile worker Charles Noiret denounced the factory as an institution where workers were transformed into 'machines devoid of skill' (Noiriel 1990). Four decades later a parliamentary enquiry into French industrial work lamented that factory rules and regulations were so widely resented that 'the spirit of antagonism seems to have become a way of life' (Perrot 1985).

Despite the slow, almost imperceptible, 'objective' formation of a French 'working class' it remains true, I think, that workers in France developed a precocious consciousness of themselves as being members of a class. It may be, as Michelle Perrot has argued, that they were seen by others as such before they came to see themselves in this way. During the 1830 Revolution the bourgeoisie sought to distinguish itself from the idle and parasitic aristocracy and from the ignorant, criminal and dangerous labouring poor. The response from workers was immediate, though not entirely uniform. Some took perverse pride in vaunting and parading those characteristics (drinking, toughness, celebration of Saint Monday) which so offended the bourgeoisie. Others came to emphasize that they, the workers, were the truly productive and useful class. What did become established was a tenacious, long-lasting discourse whose twin poles were a 'miserabilist' (and essentially unchanging) vision of the present – in which exploited, overworked and ill-nourished workers struggled for crusts of bread – juxtaposed with a vision of future salvation, of a '1789' in which 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity' was achieved. This image of the world and this language helped to shape workers' view of reality, to make sense of their daily experiences.

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‘This is a remarkable piece of historical scholarship . . . It will become required reading for the vast armies of labour, social and political historians, some of whom will be infuriated, most enraptured, all of whom will be impressed and inspired.’ Professor Jolyon Howorth, University of Bath





